

Case study: Carlyle Group

On-line backup and restore service selected by Carlyle Group

Centric Telecom and Interxion partner to underpin business continuity plans of The Carlyle Group with Secure Data Services. The Carlyle Group is a leading global private equity firm with over 300 investment professionals operating out of 24 offices in 13 countries across North America, Europe, and Asia. In Europe, The Carlyle Group has seven offices in six countries. With a distributed network of offices the firm decided to pursue a centralised approach to business continuity in Europe. An essential component of any highly resilient business continuity strategy is the ability to back up and restore data quickly and easily. With this in mind The Carlyle Group undertook a market analysis on the current technologies, companies and their respective backup and restore offerings.

“A resilient backup solution is the backbone of our business continuity strategy – loss of information regarding any of our investments would be catastrophic to our operations. As a consequence we decided to conduct an extensive market analysis of backup and restore services available in order to identify a solution that could best fit our very specific needs in Europe,” said Darren Smith, regional IT manager at The Carlyle Group.

The Challenge

The Carlyle Group put together a ‘balanced scorecard’ based on the functionality of the backup and restore solutions in the market, but more importantly, it looked for the solutions strategic fit with its current and future business requirements. The overriding objective of the selection process was to identify a fully supported backup solution that was reliable, cost effective and guaranteed data recovery for each of its regional offices in the event of data loss.

Specifically The Carlyle Group was looking for a solution that:

- Required no up-front investment in hardware, software or installation
- Was easy to set up and required minimum user interaction once set up
- Allowed The Carlyle Group regional offices to perform scheduled data backups, at multiple locations on a daily or hourly basis without the need for human intervention
- Allowed The Carlyle Group to back up and restore a whole network, servers, PC hard drives, databases, files or individual e-mails
- Allowed The Carlyle Group to back up live applications (like exchange, SQL and Oracle Data Bases)
- Had a short backup window
- Automatically stored the data offsite using the existing Internet connections

The Bottom Line

Most companies nowadays deploy backup solutions with varying degrees of complexity. Some deploy complex software with tapes, tape robots, rotation schemes and third parties picking up tapes and storing them in remote locations, whilst others periodically burn a CD / DVD and store those at home. The ultimate goal of these backup procedures is to be able to restore data. Most restores are initiated as a consequence of somebody accidentally deleting data. However, one can expect much more serious implications when data is stolen as in the case where Time Warner lost tapes with personal records of 600.000 employees or when a true disaster (such as flooding or fire) strikes. In the latter case complete systems have to be rolled back in time. If data was not backed up properly or cannot be recovered because of the system failure or medium deterioration, this can lead to significant losses. Although disasters as a cause of data loss are relatively rare, increasingly companies are taking precautions against complete data loss by choosing on-line backup and restore services that are quick and easy to use, have minimum up-front investment and automatically off-site data as soon as it is backed up.

- Used a high level security protocol (128/256 encryption) and was customer key protected
- The Carlyle Group has rightly identified that almost all traditional backup technologies have their downsides; it is

a known trade-off when more functionality also means more complexity to manage. Simple file copies to a CD do what it should do but require daily human intervention and can not cope with multiple Gigabytes of data, let alone complex live databases. The standard tape based solutions can cope with more data and complexity, yet they require specific software skills and proper tape maintenance, checking and rotation.

“Without onsite IT support in all our offices, we wanted a solution that was quick and easy to get up and running, simple to use and that was backed up with 24x7 technical support. It was essential that we were able to identify a solution that required minimum human intervention and solved the operational complexity of the traditional backup procedures,” continued Darren Smith.

Which Direction?

Over the last couple of years on-line disk based backup technology has undergone rapid development and is now maturing. As a result the price of both hard drives and associated data management applications have decreased substantially. When you combine this with the fact that most companies now enjoy broadband connectivity at highly competitive rates it becomes apparent why more and more companies are choosing on-line backup and restore rather than tape or CD based backup solutions. On-line backup and restore solutions offer a number of advantages over traditional forms of backup. Most important is the fact that they are increasingly purchased as a managed service moving the cost from capital expenditure to monthly charges.

Other recent advances in on-line backup and restore solutions include functionality like delta blocking and common file elimination, both of which help reduce the backup window whilst also reducing the total amount of data stored. This in turn reduces the amount of disk space used and therefore the cost of operating a disk based backup solution.

The new on-line disk based backup solutions do not require up-front investments, minimize manual interventions, thus reducing operational costs, are user-friendly and highly reliable. The technology allows users to automatically transfer data to a remote location (data centre). Replicating the data in one or more data centre locations can provide additional security and redundancy.

Making The Right Choice

The Carlyle Group decided to purchase Interxion's data backup and restore solution, Secure Data Service, through its Broadband service provider Centric Telecom. Centric Telecom is one of the UK's fastest growing Broadband Service Providers, serving some of the most prestigious properties and property owners from London to Edinburgh. Centric Telecom provides Broadband connectivity through its own network, creating a platform for additional services ranging from email and virus scanning to VPNs, security systems and off-site backup. “Secure Data Service (SDS) has proven to be a reliable and user friendly on-line backup solution that meets our requirements. In addition we are very pleased with the ability of Interxion to deliver the SDS solution over the Centric Telecom network. It has proven to be a cost effective option as it is based on the utility pricing model where we only pay for the amount of data we actually back up and no up-front investments are required,” concludes Darren Smith.

The Carlyle Group, signed up for SDS following a two-week trial and is now using the service to backup 500 Gigabytes of data detailing corporate and real estate investments generated in six regional offices.

About Interxion

Interxion is Europe's leading provider of carrier neutral data centre and managed services. With 20 data centres across Europe, it has the largest footprint and currently supports 1000 customers including enterprises, Systems Integrators, Internet Service Providers, hosting and telecommunications companies.

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