



UBA Secures continued FCA Compliance with a new Business Continuity solution

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Challenges

- Meeting FCA compliance requirements
- Tape backup exceeded overnight window
- Potential for data loss following system failure between backup events
- DR process could not be proven for compliance

Requirement

- Continuous backup to prevent data loss between backup events
- Ability to provide near non-stop server operations
- Minimise employee involvement
- Provide an effective and timely DR process
- Demonstrable business continuity and DR process
- Reliable, low-intervention data archival and recovery

Results

- Guarantee recovery time from server failure
- Decreased data loss potential from 24 hours to a maximum of 15 minutes
- Improved Disaster Recovery Objective
- Meet FCA requirements for data archival, business continuity, DR, protection of customer data and presentation of data for audit or review

Background

UBA is a London-based investment banking and asset management company authorised and regulated by the FCA. As an affiliate of the international United Bank for Africa, with assets in the region of \$17bn, its main UK activities include fixed income broking and proprietary trading, foreign exchange broking and proprietary trading, international trade services and global relationship management. With customers in both Europe and Africa UBA also provides correspondent banking services through trade and foreign exchange. In 2012 UBA made a fundamental change to its business strategy in the UK and sought to become a wholesale bank and accept deposits. After an FCA audit of their business continuity and data protection systems it became clear that they need to make some fundamental changes to their overall business protection strategy.

CHALLENGES

Historically UBA had used a mixture of tape and cloud backup. A tape backup was completed every night for their main production environment and to make sure that their most critical data was protected they also contracted to have that backed up nightly by a cloud service. Short comings had become apparent with this strategy as the time required for tape backups would occasionally exceed the nightly window available. Also, though the cloud service output a daily report indicating the success or failure of the previous night's events, monitoring that report fell to non-technical staff who could forget to check them if distracted by other pressing concerns.

Once UBA started taking client funds, the potential for data loss between two nightly backup events was deemed unacceptable. And most pressing of all, should a server fail or a disaster impact the business premises, the rebuild of servers would take too long to meet the FCAs expectations for a business of their size and complexity.

UBA therefore needed to unify their backup policy to guarantee the performance of all their inter-related systems and protect client assets. These changes also needed to be demonstrated to the FCA.

SOLUTION

DATAFORT reviewed UBA's operations and suggested a strategy where the majority of the company's servers would be protected with the DATAFORT Critical Care Service. This high availability service provided a unified approach for local and offsite backup, local server failover for near non-stop operations, archive and retrieval as well as cloud hosted disaster recovery.

The service was implemented for the 8 servers that were running critical applications such as that governing customer communication, trade and account information. In turn, DATAFORT worked closely with UBA during the compliance audit to ensure UBA's application for professional bank status was successful.

Continuous Data Backup

The Critical Care service utilizes a state of the art local appliance that acts as both a continuous backup device and a failover server in the event of a main production system failure. The appliance takes block level updates of all the disks in the UBA production environment at 15 minute intervals. It then compiles the data from these images taken from any time slice created over the past 7 days. This gives UBA the flexibility to recover the system as it existed a few minutes prior to failure or in the case of corruption, to recover the system from an earlier time slice just prior to corruption thus minimising data loss. Included in this capability was the ability to recover very old data or the entire network if the business was destroyed by fire or other disaster.

Failover and non-stop operations

In the event that a protected server fails, the DATAFORT Critical Care appliance recovers a functional server image and acts as a replacement server. The appliance replaces the failed server on the network and allows time for the failed server to be repaired or replaced without disrupting operations. When the hardware repair is complete the data is copied back onto the production server. As there is no interruption to the server's function during the repair process no data is lost and productivity is maintained.

Archiving

The service also compiles end of month read-only images back to the point of installation. This contributes an additional return on the investment by allowing the Critical Care service to act as a data archive as well as a business continuity tool. These images are stored locally in the UBA office for convenience but are replicated to the offsite data centre to comply with FCA guidelines for long term data retention.

Disaster Recovery (DR)

Given the critical nature of UBA's business they needed to ensure that they could have rapid access to their data and functional servers if a

disruptive event occurred. To achieve this, the onsite appliance replicates images at 15 minute intervals to an offsite server hosted in DATAFORT's financial grade data centres. If access is prevented to the office or there is a catastrophic failure, the company's key employees have cloud access to these servers running from virtual images. If access to the company's premises is impacted for an extended period the infrastructure can be rebuilt on emergency premises from the images being actively used in the data centre.

THE RESULT

UBA passed its FCA audit for Business Continuity, DR and protection of client data.

Ebele Ogbue, CEO of UBA stated, "whilst there are a number of potential solutions on the market for backup and recovery our choice to use DATAFORT above their competitors was simple. We wanted a provider who understood the needs of Financial Services organisations and DATAFORT are one of only a few who specialise in FCA regulated businesses. In addition, DATAFORT had demonstrated that it could deliver an excellent service coupled with a strong partnership approach."

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