

Fitton Associates

DATAFORT assists Fitton Associates to manage their data security issues

“The Critical Care Service makes it possible for Fitton Associates to prove to their professional indemnity insurers that all data is safely and securely stored, and is instantly recoverable in the case of a disaster. This is expected to result in a dramatic decrease in insurance premiums and could not have been achieved with the preexisting tape backup strategy.”

ISSUES:

Fitton Associates is a firm of chartered building surveyors and project managers. The nature of their business demands regular handling of important documents such as legal contracts, building specifications, architectural drawings and designs, often relating to projects valued in excess of £40 million. Because of the nature of the information they hold on behalf of their clients and its inherent ramifications, Fitton Associates is compelled to hold all client data for at least six years after the completion of a project, and in some cases as much as 12 years. The company has 2 security goals.

IMPROVE RECOVERY SPEED FROM SERVER FAILURE

Fitton handles any number of projects at one time, frequently with overlapping deadlines. This places high demands on staff and a loss of access to business information systems would immediately impact ongoing work. This could cause customer dissatisfaction and was therefore deemed a risk to the business. Analysis of the company's existing tape rotation strategy revealed that it was fraught with complexity and multiple points of failure. Further, after the time taken to retrieve the correct set of tapes from the storage site, recovery of a failed server could take as much as 48 hours.

IMPLEMENT POLICY OF SECURE READ-ONLY DATA ARCHIVES

While the company maintained tape copies of old project information off premises for the required six to twelve years, it was unknown if the oldest tapes were still a viable resource for recovery.



In addition to the need for maintaining customer data, the company's professional indemnity insurers demanded that all electronic information be safely and securely stored, and that it is instantly recoverable in the case of a disaster. The ability to demonstrate quick system recovery would result in a dramatic decrease in the company's insurance premiums. This could not have been achieved with the pre-existing tape backup strategy.

SOLUTION:

Fitton had been working for a number of years with DATAFORT, who provided a secondary form of offsite data backup for the company's most critical information. When offered the Critical Care service it was recognized as a more appropriate solution for the company's needs. The decision was made to bring the service online.

Critical Care immediately solved the two problems the company faced, and it did it without placing any burden on employees, another benefit for the busy company.

With the Critical Care solution, should Fitton's server fail, a phone call to DATAFORT's

support team will immediately invoke a virtual image of the failed machine. That virtual image will be an exact copy of the server as it existed during the last image update – which will have been no more than 15 minutes ago. This is clearly a huge improvement on tape-based backup processes that are typically updated at best every 24 hours – often less frequently.

In addition to being able to restore the latest version of the company's data, it is also possible to invoke earlier versions of the company's server as it existed at any month-end back to the day of installation. As these images cannot be altered they provide Fitton's insurers and compliance officer what they need in terms of archives.

RESULTS:

Lost or mistakenly erased data can now be restored in minutes. Quick recovery from server failure or if the company's offices are compromised are assured. In addition Jon Fitton concludes, "Given the importance and sensitivity of the information we deal with, it is unsurprising that our professional indemnity insurers are much happier with the

Critical Care solution than with tape backup. Having a full image of our server stored both in our office and on an off-site financial-grade data centre gives us the confidence and security we needed to reassure both ourselves and our insurers of the stability and speed of our backup and recovery processes."

Furthermore, the implementation of the Critical Care Service makes it possible for Fitton Associates to prove to their professional indemnity insurers that all electronic data is safely and securely stored, and is instantly recoverable in the case of a disaster. This is expected to result in a dramatic decrease in insurance premiums and could not have been achieved with the pre-existing tape backup strategy.

DATAFORT Managed IT Services

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