

Data backup time cut by two-thirds with attractively priced IBM-based solution

Rapid growth was putting strains on Halton's diverse IT environment, featuring an ERP system, database software, systems control applications, and a network that has increased from 750 users to more than 1,500 in the past five years. Most important, backup times for ever-increasing loads of data were running into the evening and sometimes into the next morning, affecting network performance. There were also concerns about security and disaster recovery.

Halton responded by putting out a tender for a fast, reliable and affordable enterprise data backup solution. The winning bid came from Markham-based Mid-Range, which presented an IBM-based solution that addressed all needs at a very attractive price, says Ralph Blauel, Director of Technology Support, Halton Region, who had previously thought the Region could not afford an IBM solution. "We've cut our daily backup time by two-thirds, eliminated the need for weekend backups and enhanced the level of service to our clients, while assuring the continuity of our business."

"Much better control over our backups and the necessary redundancy to recover from a disaster should it occur."

What about security? "We have much better control over our backups with this centralized approach, rather than relying on remote units doing backups themselves," says Blauel. "Plus with our fail-over site, we've built in the necessary redundancy to recover from a disaster should it occur."

Halton now has a single integrated solution that is scaleable and is so simple it essentially allows Halton staff to "set it and forget it." The technology includes an IBM-based Enterprise Backup Solution / Remote Data Replication Solution, employing IBM Tivoli Storage Manager (TSM), Tivoli Data Protection and IBM tape library. TSM is a full relational database that supports advanced capabilities such as progressive-incremental backup, sub-file backup, tape reclamation, collocation and policy-based management down to the individual file level.

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A key success factor was the onsite support provided by Mid-Range staff. "The Mid-Range people were very good and worked seamlessly with our people," says Jim Wallace, the region's Manager of Technology Support. "Mid-Range's project management ensured things went smoothly."

Next up is testing of Halton's disaster recovery plan – something that would not have been feasible previously. Moreover, with ERP upgrades required in the near future, the Region will be able to take advantage of Tivoli's scalability and Mid-Range's proven expertise in backup, recovery and business continuity.