

CASE STUDY >

LOCAL GOVERNMENT: SNOHOMISH COUNTY PUD

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Electric Company Energized over how easy STORServer backs up its virtualized data, saving time and money.

The Challenge:

Since 1949, Everett, Washington-based electric utility company, Snohomish County Public Utility District (PUD) #1, has provided electric and water utility services to more than 300,000 customers throughout the region. As the second largest publicly owned utility in the Pacific Northwest and the twelfth largest in the nation in terms of customers served, Snohomish County PUD #1 has an obligation to keep business running smoothly and to focus on keeping customers happy.

Like many organizations today, the PUD began looking for ways to improve efficiency across the enterprise. One such measure was the implementation of virtual machines, representing approximately 25 percent of its server environment. The next challenge was to integrate the virtual environment with their existing IBM Tivoli® Storage Manager (TSM) backup platform.

Protecting the data of the more than 1,000 employees who work for Snohomish County PUD #1 was of the utmost importance to Melinda Cooper, senior infrastructure and systems analyst for the company. She really liked the capabilities of TSM for protecting the virtualized data but in addition to backup, they also needed to capture a full image of all configurations.

The Solution:

After doing a simple online search, Cooper found STORServer's Virtual Machine Backup (VMB) software agent, designed to manage backup of the virtual environment through the TSM infrastructure.

"I downloaded the trial version, performed the necessary configurations and was in awe of how easy it was to use," said Cooper. "The restores were great and all the images were successfully backed up in no time."

VMB controls the backup for each virtual machine by integrating the VMware Consolidated Backup utilities provided by VMware and the TSM backup-archive client. VMB mounts the snapshot and calls the TSM Backup-Archive client to perform either an incremental file level backup or a full image backup.

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“Our greatest cost savings by far have been in terms of labor required. It’s as straightforward to use as technology comes these days.” - Melinda Cooper, Senior Infrastructure and Systems Analyst

Consolidating virtual machine backups with VMB frees network resources and allows virtual machines to continue operations during backup processes. The VMB’s intuitive user interface (UI) automates scheduling and reporting of full and file level backups.

“Even with 80 employees working in our IT department, the software has provided us a huge savings in both money and time,” said Cooper. “I like that I can go straight to the status reports to see how the nightly backups performed, and if a problem ever arises, STORServer is always quick to help.”

PUD’s STORServer Enterprise Backup Appliance, running the optional VMB agent currently controls 28 virtual machines on a daily basis with approximately 22 gigabytes of changed data. Full images are created once a month which can range from two to 22 gigabytes of information.

Results:

Each day, a system administrator in the Snohomish County PUD #1 IT department has the task of making sure backups from the night before ran successfully and to resolve any issues. Cooper reports that the time spent on troubleshooting has been cut down by 75 percent since the implementation of the VMB agent.

“Our greatest cost savings by far have been in terms of labor required,” said Cooper. “Previously, if anything at all went wrong with the virtual machine backups, numerous re-configurations were required and the person handling the problem needed to be very knowledgeable and familiar with VMware. Now, there are clear success and failure reports sent through VMB’s robust UI, so a system administrator in the IT department can see how backups went and quickly see if there were any problems.

“It was one of the easiest and smartest purchases I’ve made while working for Snohomish County PUD #1,” said Cooper.

ABOUT STORSERVER

STORServer is a leading provider of data protection solutions and offers the only enterprise data backup appliance that is built to order. Each backup appliance solution is tailored to the customer’s unique environment to simplify management of complex backup, archive and disaster recovery needs. STORServer’s appliances feature enterprise class data backup, archive and disaster recovery software, hardware, services and U.S.-based customer support. For more information on STORServer, please visit our website.

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