

ATTIX⁵ **BACKUP PROFESSIONAL**

CASE STUDY

METROPOLITAN PROTECTS ITS DATA WITH ATTIX5 ISSUED BY EMERGING MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

[4 March 2003] - Users want to be sure that their data is always available and recoverable should anything happen to their PCs or notebook computers. When these users are executives who always need their data immediately and in various locations too, the importance of ensuring data is backed up and easily retrievable becomes critical.

This is the situation Jacques Loubser, IT R&D manager for desktops at Metropolitan Life, one of South Africa's best performing insurance companies, had to face. Approximately 130 executives at Metropolitan needed to be sure their data was always available and recoverable should anything happen to their PCs or notebook computers.

To meet these needs, Loubser conducted an extensive product evaluation exercise to find a solution that would automatically protect critical data, without requiring the users to do anything.

"Attix5 and Internet Solutions (IS) offered us the product we had been looking for and a financial option that made sense," says Loubser. Initially, Metropolitan installed Attix5's Backup Professional on the desktops and notebooks of the 130 executives. Backup Professional regularly performs backup operations automatically, copying files from the users' hard disks to a storage server via the network. It does this operation in the background while the users continue with their jobs.

Loubser says he is "most impressed" with the performance of Attix5's Backup Professional suite.

One of the reasons for this is that Attix5 developed intelligent software, which, after initially copying the full file to the backup disk, only saves a binary patch – the part of the file that has changed – in subsequent backups. "At the time of evaluation, no other product had this ability," he notes.

"This is a very desirable situation as it provides an easier way to implement version control of important files, while requiring much less storage space than would normally be required." In other words, the patched backups allow users to not only restore the most current version of a document or spreadsheet, for example, but also enable users to restore a previous version of that file.

Loubser also says the speed of the backups is remarkable, in part due to the small size of the patch files that are transferred. "This ensures there is little or no impact on the network when files are transferred," he explains. "We have set the systems up to initiate the backup process at random times – within the workday window – so we seldom have more than two people doing a backup at the same time."

Users can cancel the backup process once it has started should they have a need to, however, after four consecutive days of cancelling, the option is no longer provided and once the user logs on, the backup will proceed. Remote access to the storage server is also provided. Through a remote access service, users can log into the Metropolitan network from any location, even a dial-up connection in a hotel room, for example. Once authenticated, the users can then log into the backup server via a Web page and set about restoring selected files or an entire backup set on their own.

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Loubser says the restore procedure is very intuitive and is a simple point-and-click process. "In addition, the data is encrypted via two keys, the password and the encryption key, which only the users know." This ensures the data remains safe and that no one else can access and read it.

"The security features really differentiate Attix5 from other software providers," he adds. "Data is transferred via a secure 1024-bit SSL connection and is again encrypted with 448-bit Blowfish encryption on the storage server. This means anyone attempting to access the Attix5 system, even physically, will see only encrypted data and will not be able to make head or tail of it. For authorised users, each person has immediate access to their own backup set once they have logged on, but cannot see anyone else's files."

Metropolitan has been very happy with the performance and stability of the Attix5 system and is currently in the process of planning further roll-outs in the near future. By understanding the impact of corporate data loss on the sustainability of business, Metropolitan has developed a new level of good business practice and is setting the pace in terms of corporate governance by implementing an effective data protection solution.

Initially, a full backup would send 1.5GB per user across Metropolitan's network. "The good thing about Attix5's software is that the data is compressed. We can currently accommodate the backup sets of 130 people on about 100GB of storage. Uncompressed, this data would require at least 300GB, thereby increasing capacity and cost."

While Backup Professional can be used to save files to remote servers over the Internet as well, the insurance giant uses its in-house server to store all the backed-up data files.

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