CVS CAREMARK

Ensuring business continuity by boosting data transfer speeds with WANrockIT WAN acceleration for TSI ViTAL virtual tape libraries

ABOUT CVS CAREMARK

CVS Caremark is one of America's leaders in pharmacies and planned benefit administration, with more than 7,000 specialty pharmacy locations in 43 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia.

"We achieved almost immediate ROI. WANrockIT has proven to be rock-solid and problem-free."

- Don Lutes, Senior Technical Advisor, CVS Caremark

CHALLENGE

Remediate a data protection strategy that was being jeopardised by low data transfer speeds. CVS aimed to accelerate its data replication process from 15 hours to less than four.

SOLUTION

Installed in a few hours with no additional cabling, Bridgeworks' WANrockIT solution instantly improved data transfer times by up to 50X.

BENEFITS

- 100% confidence in achieving data protection objectives

- Rapid ROI with a solution that costs a fraction of most WAN accelerators

- Lights-out operation with near-zero maintenance and management

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In concept, remote data replication assures data protection and recovery. In practice, it is fraught with difficulties: data transfer errors, network outages and high costs. Lengthy data transfer times make these difficulties all the more likely. Organisations that depend upon remote replication for business continuity demand swift, certain data transfer.

CVS Caremark is one company that refused to compromise on its data transfer requirements and chose Bridgeworks' WANrockIT solution to fulfill them.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

With thousands of patients and customers depending on CVS Caremark for their medication and health needs, downtime is unacceptable and business continuity must be assured.

To facilitate its business continuity strategy, CVS needed to replicate data between its two data centers in Scottsdale, Arizona, and Woonsocket, Rhode Island, on a weekly basis.

INITIAL APPROACH

To manage the site-to-site data replication process, CVS selected a ViTAL virtual tape library system from Tributary Systems, Inc. (TSI). It placed one virtual tape library in each data center and connected them via IP over a shared OC-12 link. Data was transferred asynchronously across the wide area network (WAN) between the two virtual tape libraries using the iSCSI protocol.

Don Lutes, senior technical advisor for CVS Caremark, is responsible for managing the solution. He comments: "The virtual tape library architecture worked as we expected. However, the network traffic on our link caused serious latency that negatively impacted our data transfer.

"In some cases, it would take up to 15 hours to transfer 50 GB of data. This was unacceptable: we needed a way to reduce the transfer time to less than four hours for our full backup, which exceeds 500GB."

FINDING A SOLUTION

Lutes considered several solutions to the problem. One option was switching the protocol from iSCSI to Fibre Channel over IP (FCIP), but this would still mean transferring the data across a clogged IP network.

WAN accelerator products were also an option, but the high cost of these solutions caused Lutes to keep looking.

Finally, he asked TSI for their recommendation and TSI suggested WANrockIT from Bridgeworks. WANrockIT is an in-band 1U appliance that is engineered to eliminate the effects of latency and packet loss by using sophisticated AI algorithms.

PROVING THE CONCEPT

"We decided to do a pilot project with the WANrockIT product, because the implementation really had very little risk," says Lutes.

The whole implementation took less than a day. It didn't require any additional cabling and mostly entailed the setting of two IP addresses per site.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

"The implementation was so successful that we put WANrockIT into production almost immediately," explains Lutes.

"Depending upon network conditions, performance improved by a minimum of 10X and up to 50X. We achieved almost immediate ROI. WANrockIT has proven to be rock-solid and problem-free."

ABOUT BRIDGEWORKS

Bridgeworks' expertise in high-performance data solutions stretches back over 35 years. Today, its industry-defining data acceleration technology is redefining the use of wide area networks, enabling organisations to reach transfer speeds up to 200 times faster, regardless of whether they are transferring large volumes, encrypted or media files. Using automated AI technology, Bridgeworks dramatically alleviates the effects of latency and packet loss, enabling data to get to where it needs to be faster — and maximising business performance with dramatic return on investment.