

EDRINGTON GROUP

The Edrington Group simplifies archiving and backups with Silverstring and IBM

KEY FACTS

- Incremental backup reduces the necessary overnight backup window, improving availability
- Predatar monitoring enables faster fault-finding and resolution of problems
- Simpler management saves 2.5 man-hours per week for busy IT staff



THE CHALLENGE

As The Edrington Group expanded its operations in home and overseas markets, it led to increased data volumes for file, print and email servers. A revised archiving strategy and centralised backups were required if the storage infrastructure was to keep pace with the company's growth.

THE SOLUTION

An archiving solution based on IBM DB2 Content Manager and CommonStore was implemented. The Edrington Group worked with Silverstring, the IBM AAA Business Partner, to implement IBM Tivoli Storage Manager (TSM) and the Predatar monitoring system to manage backups.

THE BENEFITS

Incremental backup reduces the necessary overnight backup window, improving availability; Tivoli tape management features increase utilisation of storage media and make it easier to find and restore data; centralised backups and Predatar monitoring enable faster fault-finding and resolution of problems, ensuring compliance in data protection; simpler management saves 2.5 man-hours per week for busy IT staff.

“All in all, the Tivoli solution saves us around 30 minutes of administrative work per day, which makes a big difference to our IT team.”

Chris McNeill, Group IT Services Manager, The Edrington Group



ABOUT EDRINGTON

The Edrington Group is Scotland’s leading international premium spirits company, owning and producing several of the most famous brands of Scotch – including The Famous Grouse, Cutty Sark, The Macallan, and the award-winning Highland Park.

The company operates from ten sites across Scotland, with its headquarters in Glasgow and sales, marketing and IT operations based in Perth. It has a site in Shanghai, and has commercial teams operating in many countries. In total, the Group employs around 900 people.

The main business challenge faced by the Edrington Group is to build its brands in the UK and expand its presence in overseas markets. As the company grows and takes on more employees, the workload for its file and mail servers is increasing. Finding a cost-effective method of handling data storage became increasingly important.

“We had a policy of archiving all the email once a year, and keeping emails for two years,” explains Chris McNeill, Group IT Services Manager at the Edrington Group. “But our mailboxes were expanding rapidly and it was becoming difficult to find disk space for all the data. We wanted a way to archive email more frequently, and in a more organised manner, so we decided to look into an enterprise solution.”

ENTERPRISE ARCHIVE SOLUTION

After considering various options, the Edrington Group decided to implement IBM DB2 Content Manager and DB2 CommonStore on an IBM System x server, creating an enterprise-level archiving platform.

“With DB2 Content Management and DB2 CommonStore, we have a flexible, policy-based archiving solution that saves time and reduces complexity,” says Chris McNeill. “We no longer need to perform archiving operations manually, and we can meet the needs of our growing business without storage costs spiralling.”

“Predatar is a great concept, and the support mechanism it supplies is very useful. The software helps us ensure that we meet our own data protection service levels by keeping us fully informed of any issues that arise – minimising the risk to our data.”

Chris McNeill, Group IT Services Manager, The Edrington Group

THE EXPERT APPROACH

Once the archiving solution had been implemented, the Edrington Group undertook a review of its backup processes. The company had been using another software package to back up its various core systems to tape, but was concerned about the scalability of the solution. Full backups were taken every night, impacting on the performance of the servers, and a lack of centralisation meant that there were many different logs to review every morning. Tape management was a complicated task, leading to under-utilisation of media and making it difficult to find the right data when a restore was required.

The new DB2 platform, however, used a different backup solution – IBM TSM. The Edrington Group recognised the potential of this software, and consulted Silverstring, an IBM AAA Business Partner specialising in the design and deployment of IBM data storage and protection solutions, about extending it to manage the company’s entire backup infrastructure.

“Silverstring showed us how TSM could provide the ideal centralised solution for all our backup requirements,” explains Chris McNeill. “With Silverstring, it wasn’t just a case of installing the software and moving on to the next deal – they really know the Tivoli product inside-out, and did an expert job of tuning and optimising the software to our specific needs.”

TSM performs incremental backups, which means that overnight backups can be completed in a much shorter window than before, and there is no longer any need to perform a full backup over the weekend. Systems can remain online almost 24x7, which helps to support employees working in different time-zones as The Edrington Group expands into overseas markets.

By providing a single, centralised backup environment, the solution helps to reduce complexity and save time for the company’s busy IT staff. With a single backup log to review, it is easier to tell whether all systems have been transferred to tape successfully.

“We used to have a colour-coded system to help us keep track of which tape was which,” adds Chris McNeill. “But Tivoli manages the tapes itself, which makes it much easier. All in all, the Tivoli solution saves us around 30 minutes of administrative work per day, which makes a big difference to our IT team.”

The Tivoli solution has been handling backups for the company’s Perth data centre for some months now, and will be deployed in the Glasgow data centre in the near future. Ultimately, the objective is to use TSM to back up all the company’s servers, and roll out Tivoli Continuous Data Protection for Files (CDP) to its laptop estate, helping to protect remote workers’ data too.

SUPPORT AND MONITORING

Following the implementation, the Edrington Group continued to work with Silverstring for training and support.

“We want to be as self-sufficient as possible, which means training up our in-house team to help us manage the Tivoli solution. Silverstring have done an excellent job with the knowledge transfer and documentation. We can now split the support burden between our team and Silverstring, so that we handle the day-to-day administration and any minor problems, while they deal with any more complex issues.”

Silverstring has developed a remote monitoring solution for TSM, which is known as Predatar. If it detects any problems with the Edrington Group’s backups, the software sends email alerts to the relevant people, ensuring a rapid response and speedy resolution.

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A PLATFORM FOR GROWTH

Chris McNeill concludes: “Working with a specialist like Silverstring has really paid dividends; they have delivered an enterprise-level backup solution which simplifies our infrastructure, reduces IT workload, and provides a platform that will support and promote growth.

“With TSM, the Edrington Group now has a backup environment that integrates seamlessly with our archiving solution and will soon provide a centralised resource for all business data. By combining Tivoli with the Predatar monitoring software, Silverstring has given us greater control over our backup environment and helped to reduce business risk.”

“We no longer need to perform archiving operations manually, and we can meet the needs of our growing business without storage costs spiralling.”

Chris McNeill, Group IT Services Manager, The Edrington Group

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