

Hackney Learning Trust Maximises New Infrastructure ROI with Zerto Virtual Replication

Hackney Learning Trust is a department within Hackney Council's Children & Young People's Service and is responsible for Hackney's children's centres, schools and early years and adult education. Hackney Learning Trust is committed to improving standards for Hackney's 27,000 children in 75 schools. Hackney Learning Trust also trade services with schools in and out of Hackney.

Meridian IT were in discussion with Hackney Learning with regard to a complete infrastructure refresh of servers, storage and fabric in order to meet new business demands. A new approach to business continuity and disaster recovery was suggested, given the growth in virtualisation, with a solution that would scale and deliver the RPO and RTO improvement that would meet these new requirements. Additionally, the ongoing configuration maintenance was challenging and there was no way to easily and non-disruptively test their plans to demonstrate to the business that they did not have any exposure from a datacentre event.

In support of the infrastructure refresh Zerto was proposed and two online demonstrations were arranged for the customer IT Team. During these sessions it became clear very quickly that Zerto would deliver what the business required and lots more besides. Hackney Learning would derive a great deal of value from leveraging Zerto Virtual Replication in their environment.

The Problem

Hackney Learning trust has two data centres located in the borough, a production site and a disaster recovery site with a 100Mb communications link between each building. As the team examined the requirements for the infrastructure, it became clear that the current BC/DR solution would not meet new service levels that the business would require as a result of the new business need and planned future growth. They needed a new solution which would not dramatically alter their carefully architected applications. Yet, the solution needed to be robust enough to protect mission critical applications that support the student body, staff, schools and colleges within the Borough of Hackney as well as Microsoft SQL Server, Exchange, and Oracle databases.

Why Zerto Virtual Replication?

Hackney Learning Trust learned of Zerto Virtual Replication from Meridian IT, a UK-based Zerto Alliance Program (ZAP) member. ZVR was deployed in support of 80 VMs vastly improving the resilience to their business. The value of ZVR was clearly shown with a very simple installation and the configuration of their BC/DR policies. Additionally, Hackney Learning Trust did not want to update their networking

Challenges

The business continuity solution must:

- Support aggressive service levels
- Be easy to install, manage and maintain
- Support ongoing, non-disruptive testing

Solution

The Zerto Virtual Replication solution:

- Aggressive service levels - very low RTOs and RPOs
- Simple to install with minimal ongoing maintenance
- One-click to test anytime

“ The previous BC/DR solution did not allow us to fully realise the benefits of VMware. We had to limit or carefully orchestrate our use of VMotion. With Zerto (Virtual Replication), it is virtual aware, so we can use all the features of VMware and we do not disrupt our BC/DR processes at all. We have realised a higher return on our VMware investment with Zerto (Virtual Replication) and the simple migration maximises the investment in our new infrastructure.”

— John Crook Head of IT Services,
Hackney Learning Trust

capabilities, and after the data was seeded at both sites, replication commenced it was clear that the 100Mb link is more than adequate to support their BC/DR needs.

The deployment was not considered complete without a failover test and this was successfully achieved during the deployment. Hackney Learning Trust is completely confident in managing the solution and that it will meet their BC/DR requirements.

- **Journal enables recovery from logical errors:** In the past if one of the VMs in the environment became corrupted, a protracted recovery would ensue. ZVR's journal stores historical changes within the environment. It can store up to 5 days' worth of data. Recovery now takes a few minutes, maximising application and data availability.
- **Aggressive recovery point objectives (RPOs) and recovery time objectives (RTOs):** ZVR delivers RPOs of seconds and RTOs of minutes, so applications are available quickly and with minimal data loss.
- **One-click disaster recovery testing:** The testing of the BC/DR process is simple and can be done with one click. The testing reminders also make the auditors happy, reminding the IT team when to execute a test and provide the report to the auditors. This was quite a change from the previous solution which was resource intensive, time consuming, and didn't really show that recovery from a data centre issue would be possible. This automated testing has made things much easier and given the team full confidence that their BC/DR processes will execute correctly.
- **Web-based management:** Hackney Learning Trust is able to provide access to ZVR without the need to access VMware vCenter through the Zerto web-based GUI. This gives the Hackney Learning Trust management team access to any reports at any time.
- **Simple management:** The Hackney Learning Trust IT Team is confident in the management of Zerto given the simplicity of the ZVR interface.
- **Flexible bandwidth requirements:** The link between the two datacentres at 100Mbps supports the corporate LAN as well as replication between sites, Hackney Learning Trust are maintaining sub 10 second RPO and RTO of minutes due to the WAN optimisation built into ZVR.
- **Reduced operational costs:** The Trust has been able to avoid cost associated with configuration management of target VM's required to maintain failover readiness as well as manual configuration intervention during failover and failback. ZVR tracks all the vMotion and Storage vMotion changes, for example, and IP address changes for failover and failback are all pre-configured so these operational costs are eliminated whilst failover and failback delays are minimised as a result of this automation.
- **Increase utilisation of new IT assets:** Hackney Learning Trust can fully exploit the new infrastructure by having production VM's at the DR site replicating to the production site and vice versa. With his cross site approach they can fully utilise the systems at both sites whilst enjoying full protection from ZVR, increasing the ROI on their IT investment.

About Meridian IT

Meridian IT Limited harnesses the expertise of world-class business consultants and technical specialists of the highest integrity to offer superior IT and business technology solutions. We empower our customers to build and manage information architectures that make sense for their businesses based on their need to balance cost, risk, performance, efficiency, availability and security.

As a full-service solutions provider, Meridian IT Ltd serves mid- to large-sized companies in many industries – manufacturing, distribution, financial, healthcare, and retail – focusing on those with complex infrastructures and stressed resources. As a result of our engagements, our customers report a reduction in risk, prolonged asset usability, increased speed-to-market, enhanced end-user productivity, lower total cost of ownership, and improved competitive advantage.

About Zerto

Zerto's award-winning software, Zerto Virtual Replication, has become the standard for protection, recovery and migration of applications in cloud and virtualized datacenters. The product won Best of Show at VMworld 2011, a Best of VMworld 2014 award as well as 2011, 2012 and 2013 Product of the Year Awards for its innovative hypervisor-based replication approach. For more information, go to www.zerto.com. ■

Zerto

Contact us today to learn more or request a free trial at www.zerto.com or info@zerto.com.

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