

Case Study

Cannell Capital Recovers Data 10 Times Faster Than With Traditional Tape Backup

Key Highlights

Customer Backup Profile

- 200GB of data
- Primary datacenter located in California
- Tape storage
- Symantec Backup Exec

Industry

- Financial Services

Challenge

- Dependent on tedious and unreliable tape technology
- IT resources are reacting to tape failure vs. being proactive making IT improvements
- Unable to recover remotely
- Slow recovery time
- Limited budget
- No secondary datacenter

Solution

- DD120 on-site appliance
- Simply Continuous Data Recovery Vault

Benefits

- Recovery guaranteed with an SLA
- Improved recovery time
- Reliable and flexible data recovery options
- Data backup and protection without tape
- Subscription pricing
- Redeploy backup personnel to work on strategic IT projects
- 24x7 customer support

About Cannell Capital

Cannell Capital, a hedge fund located in San Francisco, invests in stocks of small-cap companies. Founded in 1992 by J. Carlo Cannell, the firm calls a chosen set of high net worth individuals as clients. A combination of street smarts and a willingness to carefully vet new and innovative companies keeps them both one step ahead of the investor pack and a cut above other funds. It was this stellar combination of common sense and a quest for innovative technologies that led Cannell's IT advisor, Tim Albertson from Great Divide IT Consulting, LLC., to search for a smarter way of protecting the fund's precious data.

The Challenge

Cannell backs up 200GB of data including Microsoft Exchange, a key dataset that keeps the fund in continuous communication with clients, analysts, and brokers. Prior to using Simply Continuous, Mr. Albertson would do 4 incremental daily backups and 1 full backup per week to on-site tape using Symantec's Backup Exec. "While tape backup is slower than disk-to-disk backup, the process also requires administrative time to ensure proper labeling and storage. If tapes are mislabeled, then the restore process suffers greatly. As a consequence, the firm suffers," says Mr. Albertson. "By switching to disk, I not only reduced the backup window but also the administrative overhead."

In addition to saving time on backup, Mr. Albertson had two other challenges that needed to be addressed. First, he needed to get a copy of their data off-site securely, to somewhere outside of the SF Bay Area earthquake zone. Second, he needed the flexibility to recover data remotely without having to physically be in Cannell's primary datacenter.

The Solution

Cannell solicited advice from trusted technology vendor, Perry Dearaway from Verge Technologies. "Cannell Capital is an early adopter of cutting edge technology," says Perry. "But they are also a savvy client. If the technology doesn't provide a cost-effective way to simplify a process, then they will pass on the bells and whistles." Perry suggested replacing tape by installing a Data Domain appliance to store the backup data on-site and subscribing to Data Recovery Vault to replicate the data to a target appliance at Simply Continuous' datacenter in Arizona.

The on-site Data Domain 120 appliance is perfect for deduplicating and compressing data sets and the disk-based technology makes it easy for Cannell Capital to recover data remotely. "I work from my office in Jackson, Wyoming," says Mr. Albertson. "When we used tape, I would have to talk to an on-site non-technical employee and ask them to walk through two safes to find the correct tape. Once the tape was found, the non-technical employee would have to operate the tape library which would sometimes need a power cycle or worse. The process was long, error-prone and very frustrating. Now that we have the on-site Data Domain appliance, I can access the data remotely and recover the file within minutes. I can recover 10 times faster from disk than I can from tape."

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Results

- Ongoing and cost-efficient IT disaster recovery
- Recover files 10times faster than with tape
- Eliminate tape backup
- Longer data retention without increased costs

Simply Continuous' Data Recovery Vault provides the extra protection necessary by storing a copy of Cannell's data off-site. The Data Domain appliances are usually sold in pairs for the purpose of replicating data to a secondary datacenter. But for companies like Cannell who don't have a second datacenter, the Data Recovery Vault service is the perfect solution to address this challenge.

For a monthly fee, Cannell relies on Data Recovery Vault to store a copy of the data off-site and provide multiple and flexible ways to recover it. There are four different ways Cannell Capital can recover data and all are included with the service.

1. Recover from the on-site Data Domain appliance.
2. Reverse replicate data from the Data Domain appliance in Phoenix, Arizona to the Data Domain appliance located in San Francisco, California.
3. Recover files or small data sets by logging into a password protected Simply Continuous web-based portal and downloading the data.
4. Request a replacement Data Domain appliance fully-loaded with the most recent copy of backup data and have it shipped to Cannell's datacenter.

Results

Cannell is able to recover 10 times faster than it could with tape-based backup thanks to the flexible data recovery options backed by Simply Continuous' recovery service level agreement (SLA). Cannell now stores 4 to 5 months worth of backup data versus the 30 days they used to store on tape, and Mr. Albertson has moved on to a virtualization project for the purposes of server consolidation. "The virtualization project was always postponed because I was spending my time putting out fires related to backup."

Data Recovery Vault enables Cannell to recover much more quickly than they would have if they relied on tape. "There are so many companies relying on tape backup when they don't have to," says Mr. Albertson. "If their IT departments aren't looking for ways to better protect against outages, then they aren't staying on top of things. There's compelling technology like deduplication out there and it can be accessed through a cost-effective service like Data Recovery Vault. Companies should start embracing it."