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Jacques Lauzon
IT Analyst



Collège Jean-de-Brébeuf

Situation

The IT Department at the Collège Jean-de-Brébeuf was in the process of updating and expanding their data network. As the College began to move away from a legacy NetWare system and towards NFS with SLES 11, Pierre Fauteux, IT Coordinator, and Jacques Lauzon, IT Analyst, became increasingly aware of the fact that they needed a new backup solution that could support their expanding environment.

CHALLENGE

Their previous solution, HP Data Protector Version 6.1.1, was initially installed because of their high dependence on Novell. The college does not have a Windows domain, so they rely solely on Novell's eDirectory and, therefore, the ability to fully support Novell file systems was a very important prerequisite for a backup solution. "Many solutions either clearly do not backup Novell at all or have a lot of issues, especially when it comes to OES11. Backing up NFS and Novell was becoming a big problem. With Data Protector, as much as I tried to contact HP and tried to get them to give us a hand, their support was very poor. At one point, when we were trying to buy more HP Data Protector, I couldn't even get the vendor on the phone to sell me the product. In addition to that, restores were slow and when we attempted to go to Disk-to-Disk-to-Tape, it never worked properly," explained Lauzon.

The College's IT infrastructure is 100% virtualized and running VMware operating on Dell Hardware. They have 2 SANs using iSCSI that are connected to 6 host Dell servers, each roughly 6 core, 128 GIG style host, which uses HA for VMware. They have about 60 servers supported by this infrastructure, using Novell as the domain. They also have 7-10 Windows web access servers, used predominantly for MS SQL. The College has a stand-alone backup server and backs up to their SAN. On average, they back up about 3.5 TB. They have a Cisco infrastructure for networking and are gigabit on every workstation with a 10 GB backbone. The College also backs up their GroupWise system, which was another important requirement in a new backup solution.

SOLUTION

When the College went in search of a new solution, the IT department looked at a few options, primarily SEP sesam, Syncsort and Arkeia. “Syncsort was ruled out because of the price point. It was a very complicated product for not necessarily a very large place. It seemed a little more complicated than it had to be and they did not officially support OES 11. We have 4 large file servers on SLES 11 using NFS and it’s the extended attributes [of SLES 11] that are important to us on the NFS, but that also really limits the number of vendors you can approach,” Fauteux said. In the end, it was SEP sesam that provided everything they needed in a backup solution. “SEP sesam supported our entire infrastructure and came in at the right price point. SEP sesam is better for budgets. The way the [SEP] price structure is designed makes it easier to get no matter what your size, which was a huge advantage for people like me, who have to go out and battle for budgets,” added Fauteux.

RESULTS

The College currently backs up their entire environment with SEP sesam. SEP sesam has significantly reduced the College’s backup times and has proven to be an extremely efficient and reliable solution. “The installation [of SEP sesam] went very smoothly. I was quite impressed. The support team was excellent and we got the server up and running the same day. They gave me a template on Linux and Windows and got the GroupWise backups working and the rest was simple enough that I could do it myself. I installed the other servers within a couple of days and we had a full backup going by the end of the week. The Disk-to-Disk-to-Tape I was having trouble with worked right away with SEP sesam. A full backup now runs in about 5-6 hours. The previous solution was almost 24 hours. With HP Data Protector, support was nonexistent. It was pretty much try to dig around in the forums and figure it out for yourself. Each time I have contacted SEP, I have gotten a response over the phone, which is quite unusual. I am almost always connected to the engineer that helped me with installation and he is excellent, super knowledgeable and knows his stuff inside and out,” explained Lauzon.

“The [SEP sesam] GUI is quite easy to understand. I was able to understand the software in a few days and setting up a recovery is quite simple. I really enjoy the restore. It’s straightforward and brilliantly fast because, of course, it’s on disk so the speed and efficiency is really impressive.

CONT’D.

Now, when one of my users calls in saying ‘I’ve lost a file and need it as soon as possible,’ I can restore the file and have them test it, all while on the phone with them. It’s that fast! It’s so beneficial to be able to restore like this because with them on the phone I know exactly the file’s path and literally within seconds the file is back in its folder.”

FUTURE PLANS

The Collège Jean-de-Brébeuf is expanding their women’s program within the institution. This expansion will result in a new file server, higher disk usage, more storage, etc. SEP sesam will be an intricate part of this data expansion and its protection. The College also plans to utilize more of SEP sesam’s VMware functionality and snapshot capability. The IT Department strongly recommends SEP sesam and, in fact, has already recommended it to many members of a group of colleges in Canada that they belong to.

ABOUT COLLÈGE JEAN-de-BRÉBEUF

Collège Jean-de-Brébeuf is a private, French-language educational institution located in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, founded by Jesuits in honor of Jean-de-Brébeuf. The College offers two programs of instruction: (1) a five year secondary or high school program that focuses on students’ preparation for university and (2) CEGEP, Collège d’enseignement général et professionnel (General and Vocational College), which is equivalent to a junior college. The high school program contains two gender-based schools and contains around 1,100 total students. It is considered the best and highest graded French high school program in the Canadian province of Quebec. The CEGEP program, which contains about 1,600 students, is college-level education that prepares students for elite universities.

ABOUT SEP SOFTWARE CORP.

SEP has been delivering the widest range of backup products for enterprise level customers since 1996. With thousands of installations worldwide, SEP has developed the fastest and most reliable data backup solution available today. SEP sesam is ideal for businesses of all sizes and has proven its value for thousands of organizations across the globe. From banking to retail to education to healthcare and more, SEP sesam delivers unsurpassed performance. US and Canadian Governments, as well as many other governments around the world and thousands of customers spanning six continents, rely on SEP sesam to attain their data protection strategies.