

“With the ease of use, simplicity and cost of SEP, the CSO will continue to benefit from its new backup software platform for years to come.”

Mick Howell

Diocesan Learning Technology Officer



Diocese of Lismore Catholic Schools

Situation

The CSO regional network contains 46 campuses and is spread over a rural area of over 28,000 square kilometres, or about 10,800 square miles. The wide area data connections available were not universally high speed or reliable. The connections ranged from 2 mb to 10 mb, which meant the environment made it impractical to transfer backup data across the network and, therefore, data must be stored at the individual schools.

Consequently, a backup solution based on tape storage devices distributed among each individual school was necessary. A key requirement was to be able control and manage the remote backups from a central location while dealing with low bandwidth and connection interruptions.

CONT'D.

The solution needed to be robust enough to work on unreliable network links. There were also several urgent preexisting backup problems at specific sites that needed to be solved before the servers could be updated.

CHALLENGE

As the Diocese of Lismore Catholic Schools' (CSO) network continued to grow, the IT Administrators found that their current backup solution was no longer able to keep pace, resulting in a patchwork of backup systems that were unreliable and difficult to manage. This put the IT resources and the critical data of both the schools and of the CSO headquarters at risk. Each site, or school, was running its own standalone backup product. Monitoring of the backup was done at the school level and was prone to frequent error. Restoration of data was often delayed until technical support could get onsite, which caused significant problems not only because it left people waiting for critical data, but also created a void when administrators needed to leave HQ to help remote locations.

The CSO was also planning to update their server virtualization technology, which would create additional backup challenges for their current solution, but more importantly, provided an ideal opportunity to solve the overall backup problem in an integrated way. The new platform was based on Windows Server 2008 R2, VMware ESX 5 for virtualization, Novell Open Enterprise Server Release 2 (OES2), SUSE Linux Enterprise Server (SLES10), Ubuntu Linux and Microsoft SQL Servers. This new architecture would be implemented in each location, including upgrading the CSO HQ to maximize consistency.

SOLUTION

Initially, the CSO executed a small number of SEP installations at specific locations in order to solve the preexisting pressing backup issues, which became a test for SEP's overall functionality and reliability. The test proved extremely successful and validated SEP's abilities in CSO's demanding environment and allowed the CSO team to gain experience with the solution.

When the full implementation process of the updated server technology began, the CSO was able to migrate the existing individual SEP server licenses to remote device server licenses in order to manage all remote locations from a single management console. The Java-based, SEP master GUI, provides a central point for graphical or command line backup management of the entire network.

According to Mick Howell, the Diocesan Learning Technology Officer, "We were able to solve all of our existing backup problems quickly and with minimal cost compared to other solutions."

RESULTS

With SEP, the CSO was able to solve all of their critical backup problems and build on the initial implementation to upgrade to a network-wide, fully-integrated backup solution that is robust enough to work with imperfect rural communication networks across 46 locations. The ability to backup all of their vital systems in a consistent and manageable way means they can now focus their energy on delivering improved services to the educational community.

"As with any complex system, there have been a number of technical hurdles to overcome during the implementation process and we appreciated the dedicated support of our SEP representatives in resolving them," said Howell.

According to Howell, "The CSO will save considerably by moving to SEP backup software. Our research found that the acquisition cost is much lower than other products and the ongoing maintenance cost is even less. Added to the simplicity and ease of use of SEP, the CSO will continue to benefit from its new backup software platform for years to come. Fewer administrative resources are required and several regional employees have been trained to provide oversight for the backup processes."

ABOUT THE DIOCESE OF LISMORE

The Diocese of Lismore, located in Australia, extends from Tweed Heads to Laurieton and west to the foothills of the Great Divide. The region includes 46 schools and has an agricultural, service industry and tourist-based economy, which continues to experience significant growth. The school system consists of 34 primary schools, with an enrollment of approximately 9,100; 11 secondary schools, with an enrollment of approximately 7,700; and one non-systemic school with approximately 1,300 students at secondary level, giving a total enrollment of approximately 17,700 students. The district's total staff, including the administrative head office, is around 1,300 employees.

ABOUT SEP SOFTWARE

SEP Software has been delivering the widest range of backup and disaster recovery 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. Its flagship product is ideal for businesses of all sizes and has proven its value to thousands of organizations across the globe. SEP has delivered unsurpassed performance to numerous industries including retail, education, health care and governments worldwide. Thousands of customers spanning six continents rely on SEP to attain their data protection strategies on a daily basis.