



RSPB Soars With vRanger Pro Backup From Vizioncore

vizioncore™

THE SITUATION

Having virtualised a number of key applications RSPB required a solution which would allow it to take backups of live running virtual machines, which could then be stored at a secondary site for testing and development or disaster recovery purposes.

THE SOLUTION

"During this phase our key aim was to find a solution which could backup and restore without any downtime, and Vizioncore achieved this."

Mike Courtney
Senior Systems Engineer RSPB

THE RESULTS

"The major benefit with Vizioncore is that this whole process is very simple and requires no downtime, so our services to the organisation remain uninterrupted."

Mike Courtney
Senior Systems Engineer RSPB

"vRanger Pro is a very effective tool for taking point in time backups. When we are about to do any major work on a server we always take a snapshot of it in case we have any problems. Rather than having to perform work on the problematic server we can just return it to its original state from the machine image. This potentially can save us a great deal of time." Mike Courtney, Senior Systems Engineer RSPB.

THE SITUATION

The RSPB is Europe's largest conservation charity, with around 200 nature reserves covering over 130,000 hectares. The organisation has over 1,300 full time members of staff, and the IT department is responsible for supporting these workers, providing a range of IT services for both day to day administration and the charity's ongoing conservation and fundraising work. In 2004, the charity began to implement server virtualisation technology from VMware in order to increase server utilisation rates, simplify provisioning and management and create a more flexible IT infrastructure.

Having virtualised a number of key applications, including mail servers and conservation databases, RSPB required a solution which would allow it to take backups of live running virtual machines, which could then be stored at a secondary site for testing and development or disaster recovery purposes. "Having implemented virtualisation, we were aware of a real opportunity," said Mike Courtney, senior systems engineer at RSPB. "Because of the way VMware works, each server is effectively just a single file, so we wanted to find a way of taking images of server environments and restoring them in the exact same state without any downtime."

THE SOLUTION

RSPB originally looked at the possibility of taking a custom scripting approach to backing up virtual machines. However, the UNIX engineers brought in to develop this script were unable to achieve anything close to the levels of functionality and automation required.

Convinced that they needed a specialised solution RSPB quickly began to evaluate a number of solutions, including Vizioncore's vRanger Pro. "The evaluation process was fairly straightforward, as it simply involved taking backup images of live servers and then reinstating them onto different physical machines," said Courtney. "During this phase our key aim was to find a solution which could backup and restore without any downtime, and Vizioncore achieved this. We really liked the fact that the backup is a zip file – we knew we could take these files and, if necessary, do a manual extraction on to any server."

THE RESULTS

Using Vizioncore, RSPB has been able to automate much of its virtual machine backup process, but is also able take ad-hoc backups prior to performing any major work on a server. These backups are stored on a DR server at a secondary site from which they can easily be restored. In the event of any problems during maintenance work it can simply restore any affected server to its original state using the virtual machine image. "The major benefit with Vizioncore is that this whole process is very simple and requires no downtime, so our services to the organisation remain uninterrupted. It also reduces the time and complexity associated with testing and development as we are able to roll out backups of production servers into our testing environment with very little trouble."

NEXT STEPS

With over 60 virtual machines running on VMware ESX Server, RSPB is currently considering upgrading to the VI3 platform and is considering using vMigrator to simplify this process. The charity is also considering bolstering its disaster recovery capabilities by using vReplicator to replicate key virtual machines.



vizioncore™
Enhancing VMware Infrastructure

866 260-2483 Toll Free
847 589-2222
www.vizioncore.com
sales@vizioncore.com



www.rspb.org.uk