



vRANGER PRO™ KEEPS WELCH'S OUT OF IT JAMS

vizioncore™

THE SITUATION

Leading juice, jam and jelly maker Welch's needed a virtual backup system that could provide flat file backups of individual virtual machines running mission-critical applications for disaster recovery. Welch's also needed the ability to restore from tape or a virtual server, and did not want to manage backup agents.

THE SOLUTION

Vizioncore's vRanger Pro backs up Welch's VMware ESX Server virtual platform that hosts mission-critical systems and the test & development environment. Systems are automatically backed up with vRanger Pro each night and later transferred to tape for off-site storage.

THE RESULTS

"The ability to restore a VM from tape at the disaster recovery site is very easy. One of the biggest benefits of this system is now we have flat files to work from. We've tested numerous restores from vRanger Pro and they've all worked flawlessly."

George Scangas
Manager of IT Architecture
Welch's

THE SITUATION

When you think of grape jam, Welch's probably quickly comes to mind. But the IT department for the leading jam, jelly, juice and other fruit products producer had its own thoughts about jams. Welch's committed heavily to virtualization to meet its growing computing needs, and virtually all of the company's employees rely on virtual machines to deliver business-critical applications and data. Welch's needs to be able to quickly restore any individual VM in case of failure, and the company's overall disaster recovery hinges on restoring machines and applications from virtual files.

"Pretty much all of our employees use virtual machines, and some of our outside vendors access them too for electronic data interchange (EDI) and other transactions," said George Scangas, Welch's manager of IT architecture. "We've got just a 24- to 48-hour window to have all mission-critical systems restored."

Welch's has about 110 virtual machines running in VMware's ESX Server environment. Practically all of Welch's employees access VMs, which host a variety of applications including multiple Oracle databases, Microsoft SQL and Exchange servers, Linux and Windows operating systems, and specialized software from BEA, Computer Associates, Ringwood Trove and many other vendors. Data is also stored in an EMC CLARiON CX3-40 storage-attached network (SAN). CommVault software provides data replication and management, and some backup.

Welch's virtual environment soon outgrew the original backup processes, which included a CommVault solution that required agents to be installed on each virtual machine. As Welch's volume of VMs grew, agents became very time consuming to support and expensive. The system also lacked the flexibility that Scangas wanted, so he began investigating alternatives.

THE SOLUTION

It didn't take Scangas long to select and install vRanger Pro from Vizioncore. "There just aren't a lot of products out there that can do flat-file backups of individual virtual machines without installing agents," he said. "That's the approach we wanted, so vRanger Pro was an easy choice."

Welch's installed vRanger Pro on a Dell server, from where it monitors the entire VMware infrastructure. Welch's set the software to perform full flat file backups of each VM nightly. vRanger Pro captures the .VMDK disk image and backs up the complete virtual machine, including its operating system, configuration settings and patches, plus all the applications and data contained within. vRanger Pro is VMotion-aware, which means it automatically captures and backs up VMs that have changed hosts. Welch's transfers backup files from the server to tape the next day for storage at a disaster recovery site. Backup files can be restored to any server -- even if the hardware is dissimilar to what was backed up.

"I did all the vRanger Pro set up myself and it was super easy," said Scangas. "It was pretty much set it and forget it."

Scangas has also found vRanger Pro's features to be very advantageous for the restoration process.

"Having a fully configured virtual machine to work with is a lot easier than doing a bare metal restore," he said. "We restored our development environment by taking a flat file backup out of vRanger Pro and reinstalling it with Com-Vault. The whole process took about four hours. Had we needed to do a full bare-metal restore, it could easily have taken a couple days."

THE RESULTS

vRanger Pro is allowing to Welch's to back up its growing virtual environment more cost effectively. The legacy agent-based backup system is still in place, but Scangas is steadily expanding vRanger to cover more of its virtual machines. Because vRanger Pro is licensed by the socket, not by the VM, backup costs now grow much more slowly than Welch's virtual environment, which was not the case before.

Most importantly, vRanger Pro satisfies a key requirement of Welch's disaster recovery plan. The software has proven itself during DR testing, so Scangas has confidence that mission-critical systems can be restored within the required 48-hour window.

"We've tested numerous restores from vRanger Pro and they've all worked flawlessly. The portability is great -- restoring a VM from tape at the disaster recovery site is very, very easy," said Scangas. "Once I used it to restore 25 mission-critical virtual machines in 24 hours. vRanger Pro worked great and could have gone even faster, but some of the other parts of the system couldn't keep up."

Performance like that means Welch's can confine its jams to jars, and keep them out of IT operations.



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