

The logo for CRU DataPort, featuring the letters 'CRU' in a large, red, outlined font on a black background, with 'DataPort' in a smaller, white font on a red background below it.The text 'DataPort' in a white, sans-serif font on a red rectangular background.

SMB Adopts Disk-based Backup and Disaster Recovery for Less Than \$5,000

The Challenge

Like many small and midsize businesses, Australasian Merchandisers reached a point where its tape backup system no longer met its rising demands for data protection and disaster recovery. Australasian is an importer and distributor of stationery products in Australia. The computer systems supporting its business operations were storing increasing quantities of file and application data. It needed to protect this data and ensure its availability, but the tape backup system it used was slow and prone to failures. Backup jobs did not always complete. When data recovery was needed, it was a slow process from tape — if the correct tape was even in the office, since it moved tapes offsite for DR purposes. It was nearly impossible to perform a bare-metal test restore (i.e. recovery of an entire system to a blank hard drive, including operating system, application and data). As a result, the company went long periods without testing its recovery capabilities, facing the possibility of system downtime or a disaster without confidence in how quickly it could recover.

Australasian needed a faster, more reliable backup and recovery solution based on disk instead of tape. It also needed some form of disaster recovery protection. However, its budget was limited.



The Solution

Australasian had been a customer of Hatfield Integrated Technologies, a systems integrator, since 1983. Hatfield partnered with DataStor Australia, a distributor of backup and storage technologies, to design and integrate a disk-based backup and recovery solution that also provided a secure method of offsite storage for disaster recovery. The solution consisted of a DataPort® storage subsystem with mirrored, removable drives connected to the application server which ran Acronis® backup software. The complete price was less than \$4,757 installed.

The specific components were:

- ✓ Three **DataPort 5+** removable drive carriers for easy, secure data transportation
- ✓ Three **Seagate® Barracuda®** 320 GB NCQ SATA II disk drives
- ✓ **DataPort eSATA Enclosure** with two bays as an external storage array
- ✓ Two 2-channel SATA II RAID controllers for RAID 1 drive mirroring
- ✓ **DataPort Hard Shell Carrying Case** for transporting DR drives off site
- ✓ **Acronis True Image Echo Server™** for fast backup and recovery
- ✓ **Acronis True Image Universal Restore Server** for restoring data to different hardware or a virtual machine

The Acronis backup software uses snapshot technology to create an exact Windows® or Linux® server disk image, which includes the operating system, databases and applications. This allows it to do full bare-metal recoveries, even to dissimilar hardware or virtual machines, plus granular file recoveries. After an initial full backup, incremental snapshots take merely seconds to occur, depending on the amount of data changed since the last backup. Writing data to a backup disk can also have minimal impact on the server since it runs as a background process. "It's a completely different way of backing up, and a lot faster," said Mark Stevenson, Account Manager at DataStor.



DataPort 2 Bay
eSATA Enclosure



Extra DataPort 5+
Carrier for Transport



Hard Shell
Carrying Case

This solution backs up images to mirrored drives in the DataPort array. “With the direct-attached enclosure like the CRU-DataPort™ solution, it’s SATA connected so it’s very quick to transfer the data across,” said Stevenson. One disk remains in the enclosure at all times, while the other is swapped out daily and taken offsite for DR purposes. “That gives the customer the benefit of always having an image available, so they can drag and drop files back when they need it. They don’t have to go running home or wherever that other disk is to get their data back.”

“One of the good things about snapshot technology, and snapping to a disk, is you can immediately test your restore capability,” he said. The backup images are readily accessible and may even be mounted as a network drive. “That ability to mount an image and have people browse it like they browse a PC, makes it so much easier to do restores, and it stops calls going in to the help desk.”

The Results

Hatfield performed the installation which included the RAID controller in the customer’s server, the Acronis software, creating scripts to manage the backup processes, formatting and implementing RAID 1 on the CRU-DataPort enclosure, testing and training. The installation took one day and training to operate the system took less than one hour.

The solution now provides Australasian with a disk-based backup system for faster daily backup and recovery operations. The removable drive carrier from CRU-DataPort provides an efficient method of storing data offsite for disaster recovery. Because backup data is kept locally as well as offsite, Australasian no longer has to deal with tapes at all. In addition, the customer can perform a bare-metal restore of its systems in case of a system failure or disaster. They now have peace of mind knowing their data and business operations are protected.

Stevenson added, “The big thing is that it’s simple. Once it’s implemented... all they’ve got to do is swap out a drive each day. I think that’s why they went for it.”

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*Mark Stevenson
DataStor Australia*

Looking Forward

Hatfield is achieving 20% annual growth, in large part due to this reproducible, portable, low-cost disk-based backup and recovery solution. It plans to use this design to move more of its SMB customers to faster, disk-based backup.

While many in the industry believe disk-based backup and DR solutions are mainly for larger enterprises, Australasian has proven it can be done on a smaller scale for less than \$5,000.

About CRU-DataPort

Founded in 1986, CRU-DataPort is a pioneer in data security and data mobility devices. The company's flagship DataPort, along with Data Express and RhinoJR (formerly manufactured by StorCase), brands of removable and external hard drive enclosures are the de facto standard for physical data security and safe data transporting in government, education and business markets. CRU-DataPort products, which now include the WiebeTech brand of data storage and forensics products, are also widely used in media rich data environments including audio/video production, digital cinema, video security capture, and disk-2-disk backup and archiving applications. Backed by the industry's leading warranties and connector ratings, CRU-DataPort products are available through major distributors, PC manufacturers, specialty system builders and resellers throughout the world.

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