Top Irish Department Store Chain Increases Server Deployment Speed by 30x with **Acronis**

To avoid costly downtime, Brown Thomas ensures its data protection is as current as its fashions

REDUCING RECOVERY TIME

Founded in 1849, and now part of Selfridges Group Limited, Brown Thomas is one of Ireland's premier lifestyle and fashion stores. It has branches in Dublin, Cork, Limerick, and Galway – each offering a range of fine jewelry, designer brands, beauty products, and children's ware.

Joe Rylands, Group IT Director at Brown Thomas, was concerned about the retailer's server protection strategy. Growing data volumes meant that server backups were increasingly taking much longer – this was particularly worrying as the retailer's existing solutions required servers to be taken offline in order to create a full backup. If data volumes continued to grow, Rylands knew that soon it would be almost impossible for the IT team to complete its daily server backups outside the retailer's working hours.

However, the problem was compounded because if a server failed it could take around 11 hours to bring a new machine online. This meant it was almost certain that one, if not two days of normal operations could be lost.

Rylands notes that his team faced a similar set of issues at the workstation level. "To make things worse, we weren't at all confident that our existing solutions could provide us with sufficiently reliable data recovery capabilities even after we'd invested the time reinstalling the software and configuring the settings."

DISK IMAGING: THE PERFECT FIT

The retailer's IT team was concerned about the effectiveness of its existing backup applications and wanted to find a single vendor that could offer a single solution for servers, workstations, and laptops. After carrying out a full evaluation of the data backup and recovery market, Rylands decided that Acronis' disk imaging technology would be the best fit for his needs. This was because Acronis could meet his requirement for a single vendor backup solution that protects all hardware formats.

KEY CHALLENGES

- Create a centralized, single vendor backup and recovery solution for servers, PCs, and laptops
- Reduce backup and recovery time
- Develop a bespoke disaster recovery solution for the retailer's point of sale (POS) systems
- Cut costs associated with server rebuilds – both in terms of lost business and outsourced IT contractor fees

ENVIRONMENT

- 300 PCs and laptops running on various Windows® platforms
- 60 Dell servers running on Windows® Server

BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Time to back up a full server reduced from 1.5 hours to 15 minutes
- Server can be reconfigured in less than an hour, down from 11 hours
- Greater confidence in data recoverability in the event of a server, PC, or laptop failure
- Server backup images easily transferable to remote data center via a secure network for increased resilience
- Time needed to rebuild a till cut from two hours to five minutes
- Deployment speed is 30-times faster than a manual build

In addition, unlike many backup and recovery solutions on the market today, Acronis' software doesn't just back up data, but also saves all installed programs and preferences together with each machine's uniquely configured system settings.

"Although important in workstation and laptop environments, this function was absolutely critical for our servers as the majority of time spent bringing them back online is dedicated to reconfiguration and software reinstallation," explains Rylands. Having tested the software, he made the decision to invest in Acronis Cyber Backup Server[1] licenses. The software is used to back up and protect the 'tier one' servers that control everything from point of sale (POS) systems through to merchandising and HR applications. He also purchased Acronis Cyber Backup Workstation[2] licenses for key PCs and laptops.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY BECOMES A REALITY

Acronis' cyber protection solution provides Brown Thomas a greater degree of centralized control. Backup policies can be set remotely and the images transferred quickly and inexpensively to the retailer's data center via a secure private network, where they can either be downloaded or stored on dedicated servers.

The retailer was therefore able to add a second, previously unattainable, level of robustness – a more proactive business continuity solution. This means that, if a server fails today at a Brown Thomas store, the IT team can upload the most up-to-date Acronis disk image onto a standby server at the retailer's data center – and all the related applications for that store can be run remotely. A replacement server can then be configured either at the store or at the data center and then delivered to the relevant location, dramatically reducing server downtime as well as potentially lost business.

Prior to installing Acronis Cyber Backup, a replacement server would have to be delivered to the appropriate store and then manually rebuilt on site, which could take up to 11 hours.

DESIGNS FOR THE FUTURE

Rylands also selected Acronis because of the company's OEM capabilities. He is now working closely with Acronis' development team to create a bespoke disk imaging solution for Brown Thomas' POS machines. "We predict that once the solution is in place, we should be able to rebuild a POS unit within five minutes. That's a massive improvement as it currently takes us anywhere from 90 minutes to two hours."

Brown Thomas' IT team are all extremely pleased with Acronis' performance. Rylands also notes that there are other functions that he's yet to try, such as Acronis' remote server and workstation deployment, as well as the option to recover data to any make or model of hardware – regardless of the platform it originated from – through the Acronis Universal Restore module. "There's also an option on Acronis Cyber Backup to create an Acronis Secure Zone partition from which machines can be rebooted without the need of a system disk," comments Rylands.

> *"Acronis has brought peace of mind to us all and an increased level of confidence in the way we back up and recover our data. At the end of the day, you just can't put a price on that."*
>
> **Joe Rylands,**
> **Group IT Director**

ABOUT ACRONIS

Acronis leads the world in cyber protection – solving safety, accessibility, privacy, authenticity, and security (SAPAS) challenges with innovative backup, security, disaster recovery, and enterprise file sync and share solutions. Enhanced by AI technologies and blockchain-based authentication, Acronis protects all data in any environment: physical, virtual, cloud, mobile workloads, and applications.

With dual headquarters in Switzerland and Singapore, Acronis is a global organization that is trusted by 100% of Fortune 1000 companies. Learn more at acronis.com

[1]Previously named Acronis True Image Echo Server
[2]Previously named Acronis True Image Echo Workstation

Acronis

Learn more at
www.acronis.com