

NATION'S THIRD LARGEST CREDIT UNION PROTECT SERVERS WITH ACRONIS®

Acronis



ORGANIZATION:

Pentagon Federal Credit Union
www.penfed.org

SECTOR:

Financial services, Banking

KEY CHALLENGES:

- Speed server recoveries
- Reduce administration overhead
- Eliminate the need for expensive duplicate hardware

ENVIRONMENT:

More than 70 physical and virtual servers with data storage on high-speed virtual tape libraries

Broad variety of financial services applications

Local and remote sites, offline archive storage

SOLUTION:

- Acronis® Backup Advanced for Windows Server*, Acronis® Backup Advanced for VMware* and Acronis® Universal Restore

BENEFITS:

- Server recovery times cut by an average of 50% or more
- Increased confidence of successful recoveries to 100%
- Set&forget scheduling for backups frees administrators for other tasks
- Migrations among physical and virtual servers simplified with Acronis Universal Restore

Pentagon Federal Credit Union (PenFed) is the United States' third largest credit union, with in excess of \$14.5 billion in assets and nearly one million members.

Its core membership includes military and civilian members of the Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Defense, defense-related companies, Veterans of Foreign Wars and employees or volunteers of the American Red Cross who access its banking services over the Web from around the world. One of the nation's strongest and safest financial institutions, the 75-year old organization offers mortgages, credit cards, automobile loans, personal loans, checking, money market savings, and more.

A credit union of this size operates on a very large scale. But it is measured by how well it serves the needs of each individual member. Acronis® Backup Advanced* software helps PenFed reach that goal.

Manual administration extended staff hours

In 2005, the institution faced the challenge of protecting a growing number of line-of-business applications running on an expanding number of servers. An existing manual imaging solution required administrators to take each server off line for backups, an increasingly untenable situation in an environment delivering 24 hour access to members from around the world.

The limitations of manual imaging spilled into day-to-day administration, according to Lance Auman, Systems Integration Manager. Application and server updates and backups of critical servers required someone to show up early in the morning or over the weekend during off-peak hours. Moreover, they were routinely bringing in multiple people one Sunday a month to refresh images.

Recoveries took time too. If a server was to fail, the recovery had to be manually carried out from a boot image. "We experienced too many situations where a server would blow up, and the immediate response from our management would be, 'What was the last date you have images from all critical servers?'" Auman says. "We needed something more automated that would reduce the time we were spending on administration." PenFed decided to evaluate Acronis data protection solutions.

Ease of use attracts attention

PenFed's IT team concluded that Acronis could bring a substantial level of automation to backup tasks and that it had the potential to eliminate long nights and many weekend activities. But Acronis had to pass a final test: user friendliness, so they assigned a junior engineer to carry out a full install of the Acronis software, which was a success. "That confirmed how usable and supportable the product was," Auman says. Today, PenFed owns 70 Acronis Backup Advanced licenses for Windows and VMware Servers to protect a combination of physical and virtual VMware® servers, and it plans to purchase another 10 or 15 more licenses shortly. Acronis protects the System drive and critical applications while data is generally restored through high-speed virtual tape libraries. "If we ever have a server problem, we don't have to search for the latest image and hope it works; it's at hand and we know it's good," Auman says.

The beauty of 'Set & Forget'

Acronis is a 'set & forget' product. "That's the beauty of Acronis," Auman says. "We set policies and ignore it, knowing that we're protected all the time." Administrators can remotely launch and activate backups, and Acronis' imaging capability recovers systems in a fraction of the time and effort previously required. "In the past, if we had a Dell 1850 that we needed to replace, we either had to reinstall an image of that machine on duplicate hardware or reinstall applications on a new machine from scratch. With Acronis Universal Restore, we can restore an image of another server on new hardware, give it new drivers and walk away."

Acronis Universal Restore also speeds physical-to-virtual, virtual-to-physical and all other migration scenarios. "Acronis gives us a hardware-agnostic flexibility, that we didn't have before, to restore the C: drive and Windows operating system anywhere we like," Auman points out. Acronis also gives his staff more time to be proactive with upgrades and other activities without inflating the budget. "By putting in Acronis, we know servers are protected. And, whenever we install a new, critical application, we buy an Acronis license to protect it."

"It's all about RTO"

Auman credits Acronis live imaging technology and Acronis Universal Restore for cutting repetitive administration tasks. "It's all about RTO [Recovery Time Objectives]. Our recovery time is cut by an average of 50% or more. And it no longer matters what hardware we use to recover to. But in addition to savings, one of the main benefits we get out of Acronis is pure sanity. Acronis is a vendor I rely on. We've been able to reduce weekend hours by 10 to 15%."

Moving forward, PenFed is intrigued about another feature, Acronis Instant Restore, wherein an administrator sets Acronis to automatically image a mission-critical machine every five minutes and restore the image just as frequently to a preconfigured virtual machine running on standby. If the original machine fails, an administrator can launch the standby machine instantly with a mouse click. "We have an immediate need for that," Auman says.

ABOUT ACRONIS

Acronis sets the standard for New Generation Data Protection through its backup, disaster recovery, and secure access solutions. Powered by the AnyData Engine and set apart by its image technology, Acronis delivers easy, complete and safe backups of all files, applications and OS across any environment—virtual, physical, cloud and mobile.

Founded in 2002, Acronis protects the data of over 5 million consumers and 300,000 businesses in over 130 countries. With its more than 50 patents, Acronis' products have been named best product of the year by Network Computing, TechTarget and IT Professional and cover a range of features, including migration, cloning and replication.

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