



Success Story

RICHARD ROGERS PARTNERSHIP

Richard Rogers Partnership uses Overland Storage REO disk-based backup appliance for pro-active, flexible data storage management

Challenges:

- Business success and increased mobile working / email use among many factors causing ramping up of data
- Weekend backups starting to impinge on Monday morning work
- File restores taking up too much valuable fee earner time
- Restores / file-juggling taking up too much IT team time
- Need for more flexible and scalable data storage arrangements
- Need for more secure approach to archiving

Solution:

NEO 2000 and REO 9000

Benefits:

- Much more control over secondary data storage
- Considerably reduced backup times
- Reduction of fee earner downtime from faster restores and less data loss
- Reduction of time spent by IT team juggling data
- Improved and more secure archiving process
- Straightforward integration with existing business and IT environments / procedures
- Flexible solution to adapt to changing business requirements
- Peace of mind from tighter control / easier management of data storage

Reseller:

B2Net Ltd
www.b2net.co.uk

www.rrp.co.uk

Richard Rogers Partnership (RRP) is an international architecture practice which has attracted critical acclaim and won dozens of international awards over three decades. Its innovative buildings engender excitement for their users and the public. In RRP's offices (London, Madrid, Barcelona, Tokyo) and project sites where the ideas are brought to life the firm's 140 staff work at the leading edge.

"I emphasised the need for easily managed and expandable storage growth"

David Liu, IT manager,
Richard Rogers Partnership

"As an international architectural practice with a significant number of projects under way at any time, we need to have the right technology to back this scale of activity," explains David Liu, IT manager at RRP. He enjoys evaluating and introducing useful new tools for the business — but he is also a man with a balancing act. "On the server and network end, we're a little more conservative, because obviously my main goal is to keep everything running as smoothly as possible. I have to provide as reliable and problem-free an environment as I can at all times."

The Challenge

RRP uses CAD (computer aided design) software to create all its drawings. These are passed to contractors in various formats including as pdfs, and via collaborative extranets. The firm must retain drawings throughout the life of its buildings. In 2004, however, the archiving aspect of data storage, though challenging, was fast becoming overshadowed by the issue of data growth. The firm's increasing success, with more and more projects, was part of the cause. Mobile working, and thus email use, was "on the up". CAD data was growing by around 65% per annum and RRP's DTP data —

resulting from the hundreds of reports and brochures created during bidding / competition phases for new work — was getting close to increasing threefold annually.

Difficulties arising from this were starting to pull IT team members' time away from more important matters. "Because the storage system wasn't easily expandable we were constantly deleting and archiving, which of course was quite labour intensive," Liu continues. The tape multiloader was reaching its limits with weekend backups; overnight backups were on the point of affecting people who began work early.

It was time to stop fighting data growth and go for a more controlled approach. David Liu's brief to shortlist potential suppliers of new solutions stated that his first priority was managing the storage growth. Better backup and restore capabilities was a close second, and improving the archiving process — at that point carried out with CDs and DVDs and a cataloguing database — third on Liu's list.

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"I emphasised the need for easily managed and expandable storage growth," Liu recalls. "And I wanted disk-to-disk backups, to improve the performance of the restore process." Research had convinced him that D2D was the way ahead. "The idea was to push everything onto disk because it's much faster initially. Then the disk-to-tape process could run in the background and leave everything around it unaffected."

The Solution

The winning contender was reseller B2Net. Their solution, besides NetApp networking and



BakBone backup software, included an Overland Storage REO 9000 disk-based backup and recovery appliance, and an Overland NEO 2000 LT03 tape library. It represented good value for money, David Liu believed, and offered features that he thought particularly well-matched to RRP's requirements.

Everything was installed, fitting readily with the Practice's business and IT environments and procedures. The IT team carried out a short introduction phase to check new procedures before transferring all data across during two consecutive weekends. "For the users it was seamless," comments Liu.

Fee earners could see real improvements in a short space of time. To Liu, concerned with the means as well as the end, "The Overland kit performs a crucial role". This includes the NEO 2000 LTO3 tape library: "Given that our previous tapes had a maximum of 200 GB we can now go up to 800 GB, so this has been a fantastic benefit".

The real star however is the disk unit: says Liu "The REO does two jobs for us. Not only is it our disk-to-disk backup solution, it is also our archive store". The fully populated (9.6 Tb) REO has one volume dedicated to disk-to-disk activity, another to email archiving, and another to main archiving.

"The Overland kit has given us much better storage management of secondary data and control of our backup processes than the previous tape and optical disk methods."

The Benefits

Liu lists the advantages in order of importance to the IT team: "Firstly we have much greater, and more flexible, control of our storage".

Secondly, "We can carry out much quicker backups and restores. Our nightly backup which used to run to ten hours now completes in three. And our weekend backup, which

used to take 40 hours, now takes about 30 hours — with a vastly greater amount of data." With restores, the new arrangements help users and IT staff alike. Previously it took an hour or more of IT team member time to find a tape and restore a lost file. Now the user is working again within a few minutes.

"The third major benefit is we have a much improved archiving process." Earlier work is infrequently accessed by the architects; the old database / CD approach had generally enabled them to locate something within a quarter of an hour. This has been halved, with greater convenience to the user. "And no-one can walk off with a CD. It's the security of knowing the information is always there!" comments Liu.

The REO disk unit "is extremely reliable," he observes — but he expected that. Another attribute is more thought-provoking for his future plans: "Because you can use the iSCSI protocol to attach servers to it that gives it a lot more flexibility beyond its backup and archiving functions. It means, for example, that I can buy a small server and attach it indirectly, using iSCSI, to a bunch of disks on the REO, and they all behave as if they are attached directly to that server. So instead of having say four large servers all with their own separate data volumes, I just have the REO sitting there, and can have four smaller servers, or even just one server running virtual servers, all pointing to one box which has its own data protection features as well."

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About Overland Storage

Now in its 25th year, Overland Storage is a market leader and innovative provider of simply protected storage solutions – smart data protection appliances and software modules designed to work together, affordably, to ensure that information is automatically safe, readily available and always there. Overland's award-winning data protection solutions include the ULTIMUS SERIES™ of protected primary storage appliances; the REO SERIES™ of disk-based backup and recovery appliances; and the NEO SERIES® of tape libraries. Overland sells its products through leading OEMs, commercial distributors, storage integrators and value-added resellers. For more information, visit Overland's web site at www.overlandstorage.com.

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