HUNT PETROLEUM

SUCCESS STORY

Leading Oil & Gas Company Protects Geophysical Data and Increases Management Efficiencies While Lowering Storage Costs

CHALLENGES

- *Annual 30 percent rise in data strained storage resources*
- *Complex, time-consuming backups failed frequently*
- *Insufficient disk space to conduct complete restores*
- *Lengthy backup window impacted network performance*
- *Mounting ILM and disaster recovery requirements necessitated a more robust storage platform*

THE SOLUTION

REO 4000 and NEO 2000

BENEFITS

- *Near-instantaneous restores and significantly reduced backup windows*
- *Integrated D2D2T solution yields more than 30 percent in cost savings through improved storage management and lowered administrative overhead*
- *Greater leverage in existing FC SAN while bolstering Information Lifecycle Management (ILM) strategies*
- *Improved data replication for heightened disaster recovery planning and business continuance*

RESELLER

Dallas Digital Services, www.ddserv.com

Hunt Petroleum Corporation (HPC) is a well-known exploration and production company with a strong commitment to its investments in oil and gas operations, primarily in Texas, Louisiana, North Dakota and the Gulf of Mexico. The 50-year old company embraces leading-edge technology and best-of-class practices to meet its corporate growth objectives and safeguard vital geophysical data.

By adopting information lifecycle management (ILM) strategies, HPC has determined the value of different types of data required by the company's employees, including geologists and geophysicists who use sophisticated, storage-intensive modeling and imaging applications. Through this process, HPC discovered that increasing reliance on industry-specific applications caused data to grow by more than 30 percent each year, straining storage resources at the company's Dallas and Houston data centers.

"We were running out of disk space on our primary storage array while backup and recovery operations were unreliable and took far too long," recalls Darrin Edgerton, network administrator for Hunt Petroleum. "We couldn't even do a complete data restore because of resource constraints, and yet it is increasingly important to protect our valuable information."

THE CHALLENGE

Conducting full backups to tape often took more than two days to complete, encroaching into the production environment and impacting network performance. In addition, HPC's resource-constrained IT department spent an inordinate amount of administrative time swapping out tapes and restarting failed backups. "We weren't able to keep up with our data demands-and couldn't attest to the integrity of our backups," notes Edgerton. "HPC also wasn't able to support different layers of storage for less-critical data."

For example, HPC wanted a more effective and economical way to support tier-two storage requirements. "As part of our ILM efforts, we determined which data was most critical to the organization and therefore needed to reside on our high-end Fibre Channel SAN, as well as the short-term data that could be saved on a more cost-effective resource," explains Edgerton. In February 2004, HPC initiated its search for a flexible storage platform that could meet the company's rapid rise in data while laying the foundation for replicating data between its Dallas and Houston sites.

"Overland's REO/NEO solution exceeded our expectations for affordable storage and greatly improved backup and recovery."

Darrin Edgerton
Network Administrator

Aside from the FC SAN, HPC had an assortment of direct attached storage and an older tape autoloader from Overland Storage. While the team determined that a new, higher-capacity tape library was needed, they were impressed with the reliability of HPC's original Overland system as well as the company's track record of excellent service and support. Furthermore, HPC worked with Texas-based Dallas Digital Services, a local integrator that highly recommended Overland's NEO™ 2000 tape library system to replace the older autoloader.

THE SOLUTION

After evaluating other leading tape libraries, HPC decided that Overland's NEO 2000 provided scalable, high-end performance at an optimal price. Dallas Digital Services recommended the NEO 2000 tape library system in conjunction with Overland's REO™ 4000 disk-based backup and recovery appliance. Together, the flexible NEO 2000 and versatile REO 4000 deliver powerful yet affordable disk-to-disk-to-tape (D2D2T) capabilities to support HPC's near- and long-term storage requirements.

Following the successful installation of HPC's first NEO 2000 at its Houston location in March 2004, a second NEO 2000 was deployed at headquarters in Dallas. Designed to keep pace with expanding data requirements, each NEO module has 26 (SDLT) or 30 (LTO) cartridge slots and up to two tape drives to provide a maximum of 15.6 TB of capacity. With the NEO 2000 in place, HPC can back-up and restore data from a single server via Fibre Channel, multiple local servers running Unix or Linux as well as the FC SAN with a combination of servers, operating systems and interfaces. Sophisticated capabilities ranging from expansion-on-demand and remote management to non-stop operation and partitioning ensure reliable, trouble-free operation.

Six months after installing its NEO tape libraries, HPC decided to deploy a series of REO 4000 appliances at its Dallas and Houston locations. "In researching D2D solutions, we discovered that Overland's REO offered greater functionality than SATA drives costing twice as much," notes Edgerton.

With Dallas Digital leading the implementation, HPC's REO appliances were up and running at both data centers in under five hours. No special training or expertise was required and the system's intuitive GUI made completing block-level transfers straightforward and simple. As a result, HPC quickly began taking advantage of its combined REO/NEO solution to support nearly 3 TB of storage while streamlining costs and improving management efficiencies.

THE BENEFITS

One of the key benefits of the integrated D2D2T solution is split-second restores. "No longer do we need to hunt for spare tapes or restart backup operations," notes Edgerton. "In the event of a system failure, data can be restored almost instantaneously."

In addition, HPC has seen a significant reduction in its backup window. "Full backups now are completed in about eight hours, with none of the administrative overhead previously required to manage the backup process," explains Edgerton.

With three REOs currently in place and more planned for the future, HPC achieves disk-speed data recovery while better leveraging an existing investment in its expensive FC SAN. "In the future, we will be offloading tier-two storage onto the REO, so we can maximize storage utilization on the FC SAN," says Edgerton. In addition, Edgerton predicts that the REO will be used heavily in the future to handle near-term file restores, bolster ILM strategies and ease system upgrades. In addition, plans are underway to address intermediate storage needs during application migrations with the REO as well as support remote data replication between Dallas and Houston as part of heightened disaster recovery planning.

"The REO is a blazing fast workhorse, with data transfer rates up to 100 Mbps," concludes Edgerton. "Overland's REO/NEO solution has exceeded our expectations for affordable storage and greatly improved backup and recovery. As a result, we'll continue to look for innovative ways to use these best-of-class products to ensure data integrity and further simplify disaster recovery and business continuance."

About Overland Storage

For 25 years, Overland Storage has delivered world-class data protection solutions designed to ensure business continuity. Focused on backup and recovery, Overland's data protection solutions include the REO SERIES™ family of disk-based backup and recovery appliances and the award-winning NEO SERIES™ of tape libraries. Overland sells its products worldwide 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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