NetIQ

Customer Success Story
PlateSpin Forge

Craig Group Ltd.

Craig Group Ltd. needed to provide simple, practical and easy-to-test disaster recovery capability for its mixed estate of physical and virtual Microsoft Windows servers.



Overview

Craig Group Ltd. is a global shipping and energy services company with experience in offshore support vessels, oil-field procurement, fishing and leisure. One of Scotland's top 100 companies, Craig Group Ltd. employs more than 1,000 people and generates revenues of £110 million (US$163 million).

Challenge

As an international company with interests in shipping and procurement for the oil and gas sector, Craig Group Ltd. operates 24 hours a day. Users log into corporate IT systems from the UK, USA and South Africa, so ensuring the availability of these systems is a key priority.

"Our IT systems are reliable and available in everyday operation, but we wanted to achieve a more workable and robust disaster recovery strategy," said Bruce Catto, group IT manager at Craig Group Ltd. "We had a standard overnight backup policy, but in the event of a disaster, actually restoring all of our systems onto new hardware would have been a time-consuming process, resulting in several days of downtime for our users."

"With PlateSpin Forge, we can get all our systems up and running again within a few hours."

BRUCE CATTO
Group IT Manager
Craig Group Ltd.

When one of the company's server rooms narrowly escaped damage during a winter flood, Craig Group Ltd. realised the urgency of implementing a higher-performance, cost-effective disaster recovery solution to cover all servers, both physical and virtual.

Solution

Craig Group Ltd. decided to consult Evision, one of its most trusted technology partners. "Evision has been an infrastructure partner of ours for several years and understands our business, systems and requirements very well," said Catto. Before the meeting, Catto and his colleagues were discussing what their ideal disaster recovery solution would be—a single solution that could replicate both physical and virtual servers offsite in real time. When Evision came into the meeting and presented PlateSpin Forge®, they were stunned. "It was exactly what we had been discussing moments earlier, but we didn't think would be possible in a single solution," Catto said.

CRAIGGROUP

At a Glance

- **Industry**
  Retail & Distribution
- **Location**
  Scotland
- **Challenge**
  The organisation needed a powerful disaster recovery strategy.
- **Solution**
  Use PlateSpin Forge to replicate both physical and virtual servers offsite in real time during an outage.
- **Results**
  + Reduced RTO to a few hours as opposed to several days
  + Introduced the ability to restore to system images that are only an hour old instead of having to revert to the previous night's backup and potentially losing up to a day's worth of data

> **"In the event of a real disaster, our users would be able to log into the applications they need from home, and the business could continue almost as normal. For our company, that reassurance is absolutely priceless."**
>
> **BRUCE CATTO**
> Group IT Manager
> Craig Group Ltd.

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NetIQ lent a demonstration model to Craig Group Ltd. for a month of comprehensive testing. "We tested all the capabilities of PlateSpin Forge and were impressed," said Catto. "We saw how easy it was to replicate our physical and virtual servers to the PlateSpin Forge and fail over to them. We also proved that we could restore workloads from the appliance to a new physical server, even if it was a different model from the original hardware. As a result, we decided to go ahead with a full implementation."

PlateSpin Forge replicates data from 20 Microsoft Windows servers according to predefined policies. It also takes snapshots of file servers, an ERP system, vessel management system, Microsoft SQL Server databases and Exchange servers every hour.

Catto continued, "We have now instituted a monthly disaster recovery testing plan. The tests are easy to run—it's only a matter of a few mouse clicks—and have been very successful so far. We have also recently been audited by KPMG, who were very impressed by the solution we now have in place, and the ease with which it can be tested and brought into production when required."

Results

Thankfully, Craig Group Ltd. has never experienced a genuine disaster recovery situation—but the value of the PlateSpin Forge solution is still apparent to the IT team. "The last test we did, we performed a failover to the PlateSpin Forge and asked users to log on from all over the world," said Catto. "Even under load, the performance was excellent."

Above all, the improvement in recovery time objectives and recovery point objectives (RTO and RPO) is significant. "With PlateSpin Forge, we can get all our systems up and running again within a few hours, whereas previously it would have been a time-consuming and extensive operation, which would have taken several days," said Catto. "Moreover, we can restore to system images that are only an hour old, instead of having to revert to the previous night's backup and potentially losing up to a day's worth of data. In the event of a real disaster, our users would be able to log into the applications they need from home, and the business could continue almost as normal. For our company, that reassurance is absolutely priceless."

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