The University of Edinburgh
Reduces Infrastructure Costs While Improving Service Levels and Planning

Industry
Education

Challenge
The university needed greater visibility into backup operations, more informed capacity planning across diverse IT infrastructures, and a more efficient reporting process.

Results
- Streamlined troubleshooting and problem resolution by gaining a single view for backup management across the IT infrastructure
- Simplified operations and maximized resources through real-time, automated reporting on TSM servers and other storage devices
- Redeployed headcount to more strategic initiatives by leveraging proactive trending reports for effective capacity planning

Products
- Rocket® Servergraph

Application
- Backup Monitoring and Reporting

Company

Founded in 1583, the University of Edinburgh is one of the world's most prestigious academic institutions. Through the achievements of its staff and students, the school presents cutting-edge research, inspirational teaching, and innovative thinking as its central ethos, attracting great minds from around the globe. Today the school's staff of 13,744 full- and part-time employees instructs 35,582 students during the academic year. To support this large community, the college's IT department provides fully integrated physical and digital services.

Challenge

The university's IT department supported a traditional enterprise IT setup as well as a large, distributed infrastructure dedicated solely to research. The environment included approximately 700 servers, 2,000 virtual machines, 1.5 petabytes of SANs for the enterprise IT systems, and a number of dispersed research servers. To simplify operations, Edinburgh wanted to integrate its enterprise and research IT infrastructures to streamline backup and recovery. In addition to an end-to-end view of the health of the backup systems and historical trending information for capacity planning, the university wanted to automate the reporting process so that administrators would no longer have to dig through mountains of data. Research teams were forced to dedicate half of a full-time employee to collecting and manually plotting information to gain some sense of what was happening in the backup environment.

Solution

Based on an extensive search and recommendations from peer universities, the Edinburgh IT team selected Rocket® Servergraph. Other tools the team evaluated simply didn't offer the combination of the Servergraph technology's ease of use, automated reporting and trending, prioritized real-time alerts, and ability to manage TSM across a distributed environment.

Results

"A year and a half into the Servergraph implementation we continue to be pleasantly surprised by the additional functionalities available to us," said Martin Campbell, Unix & Virtualization Team Lead for The University of Edinburgh. "Before Servergraph, it was virtually impossible for the admins on my team to get answers to critical questions such as: are all the juke boxes working; what is the status of all the different backup drives; is any TSM instance crashing; how many backups have they missed in the last 6 months; have they ever missed three consecutive backups; and did all the Oracle system online backups complete overnight? Servergraph is very strong at quickly answering these questions, and we are now getting the reports we need to properly protect the whole IT infrastructure. We are also able to deliver the intricate reporting the downstream owners of the research systems need without anyone spending hours doing manual work. Our staff resources can now be better utilized to advance the mission of the research departments."

Campbell continued, "Every morning in your inbox you get a synopsis of all the systems and whether they are running. The most important report the team receives is the daily system health-check. In one view, you get a quick summary of the part of the environment you are responsible for, and can immediately see if there is a problem." He said, "We no longer have to blindly search for issues. The problems are obvious with Servergraph, and it allows the team to immediately begin diving into the details to expedite resolution."

Not surprisingly, the Servergraph TSM Administrator console has now become the default console for TSM. Campbell explained, "While it's done a fantastic job monitoring both local and remote TSM servers, we found it can do so much more. Our research team is also monitoring several different storage platforms, with additional plans to use Servergraph to better manage our VM environment."

According to Campbell, "Servergraph was up and running within 15 minutes and producing trending reports within 24 hours." He added that Rocket Software support played an active role in helping the university take full advantage of the solution. "The Rocket technical team has been very proactive to help us accelerate the process and customize the solution to our environment. They react quickly, and are very straightforward helping us transform our data protection environment."

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