Data Protection Solutions Get a Data Management and Recovery Solution to Support Them

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Just as organizations finally get their data protected, they are finding that managing all of this data and then recovering it is every bit as tough as initially backing it up. Different backup solutions, different backup policies and no consistent means to perform recovery all contribute to them facing a new set of data management and recovery challenges. Using NetVault Extended Architecture (XA) from Dell, organizations for the first time get access to a solution they may use to centrally manage all of their protected data and then quickly recover it.

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Recovery Challenges

- Physical servers may use one type of backup software

- Virtual machines may use another backup software for data protection

- Mission critical applications may have their own data protection solution

- Data protection solutions do replication and maintain their own set of data

- Different backup administrators for each backup solution

- No centralized point to administer recovery

Solution

- NetVault Extended Architecture (XA)

Benefits

- Creates a common, centralized management console

- Individuals may assume data management and recovery roles

- Create and apply a common set of policies across the environment

- Create application-centric views with data protection SLAs

To date, backup has been largely driven by a single business objective: creating a recoverable copy of data. But as business service level agreements (SLAs) continue to demand ever shorter application recovery times, creating backups—even if they are good backups—without having any visibility into expected recovery times is simply not enough. Now, the requirements of physical and virtual application recovery must align with these heightened business expectations.

The Backup "Problem" Goes Away

Backup was—and has been—the focal point of the backup and recovery equation for a long time for two simple reasons. First, the backup process itself was problematic and time-consuming to manage, so just creating a "good" backup was considered a success. SLAs associated with recovery were generally non-existent, so "best faith" recovery efforts were deemed as acceptable by many organizations.

Then, everything about the backup side of the equation changed. Disk was introduced as a backup target. Backup data was deduplicated. Servers were virtualized. Snapshots emerged as a better, faster way to protect data.

Together, these technologies combined to remove much of what made backup difficult to complete in the first place. As a result, companies are finally freed to turn their attention to recovery.

"Recovery" is Every Bit as Tough as Backup

Sometimes viewed as the "easy" part of the backup and recovery equation, companies are finding out that recoveries are every bit as challenging as creating the original backup. The first obstacle that most organizations encounter when trying to recover data is simply determining which backup software was used to back the application up.

> *Using NetVault XA, organizations get the new platform they need that lets them leave their existing data protection solutions in place while getting new flexibility to manage them more effectively and recover their applications and application data more quickly."*
>
> *—Jerome Wendt, DCIG Lead Analyst*

- Physical servers may use one type of backup software

- Virtual machines (VMs) may have their own approach to data protection

- Mission critical applications may have their own data protection solution

- Disaster recovery (DR) solutions do replication and maintain their own set of data

This multi-pronged approach to data protection may force organizations to spend at least some time tracking down which solution was used to protect the data before a recovery occurs. Then, once it is determined how the data was protected, they may still need to locate the responsible backup administrator before they can complete the recovery.

This multi-step approach to recovery leads to many organizations wanting to standardize on one backup product to simplify recovery. However this is easier said than done.

- A backup solution takes time to implement and tune across the infrastructure.

- Applications may need specific features only available from a specific product.

- A single backup software solution may not offer recovery options that meet new SLAs for how quickly recoveries must occur for specific applications.

- A backup software solution may not exist that can recover all of their applications.

- Even if it says it can "do it all," is the solution proven and in use at other sites?

- Its cost may exceed what an organization is willing and/or able to spend.

A Two-fold Set of Data Management and Recovery Challenges

This inability to either easily recover data or consolidate on one backup solution creates a larger, two-fold set of data management and recovery challenges.

On the data management side, multiple backup products store data in individual data repositories. This makes it almost impossible to implement a consistent methodology for applying and managing data retention and management policies across these backup data stores.

On the recovery side, organizations have limited flexibility to recover their data as backup software only provides them with an infrastructure-centric view of their data.

For example, they may be notified that "*SRVSQL04's backup has completed successfully.*" While this is "*good news*" from the backup administrator's perspective, the organization may not know what SRVSQL4's purpose is *(perhaps its accounting data resides on it.)*

In the event a recovery of that data is needed, the organization may have no clue that it must first navigate to SRVSQL4 inside of the backup software and then locate the appropriate backup job before it can recover its accounting data.

Compounding the recovery problem, if the IT administrator is unavailable, the recovery may have to wait until he/she can perform it. Most backup software provides no centralized means to either perform recoveries across different backup products or grant permission to someone other than the IT administrator to perform restores.

NetVault Extended Architecture

It is these specific challenges that NetVault XA addresses. Rather than requiring organizations implement a single backup software solution to protect their infrastructure, NetVault XA serves as the central console that organizations may use to manage data and do recoveries across any of the solutions in its data protection portfolio, which include the following product lines:

- vRanger

- NetVault

- LiteSpeed

- Recovery Manager

These four (4) data protection product families provide organizations with the *proven* backup and recovery solutions that they want for their varied but specific data protection needs. They may use vRanger for virtual machine backup, NetVault Backup for cross-platform backup, LiteSpeed for SQL Server for database protection, and Recovery Manager for application-specific recoveries.

NetVault XA, which will be bundled into the Dell products at no additional charge and will initially support NetVault Backup, NetVault SmartDisk, and vRanger upon its release to market later this year, then adds to the value these products individually provide by putting a layer of management software across the top of them. However, NetVault XA is more than just a dashboard from which these products are launched and then separately managed. NetVault XA instead integrates seamlessly with these Dell products so that organizations may:

1. *Create a common, centralized management console.* This eliminates the need to first identify the right backup product and person before a recovery may be initiated. Instead, any individual can go to this console and recover an application regardless of what product was used to protect it.

Source: Dell Software

2. *Assign data management and recovery roles to individuals other than the backup administrator.* Using this central console, application owners, database administrators or even third parties may be granted access to NetVault XA with the appropriate permissions to perform tasks ranging from recovering to accessing disparate backup stores for eDiscoveries. This may be done securely and without burdening IT because of NetVault XA's inherent security safeguards and integration into these data protection products.

Source: Dell Software

3. *Create and apply a common set of policies across these products.* Using NetVault XA, administrators may now centrally set data retention and deletion policies once and leave it to NetVault XA to translate, apply and enforce those policies across these products.

Source: Dell Software

4. *Create application-centric views with data protection service level agreements.* Organizations may create customized application-centric views within NetVault XA that map back to their underlying infrastructure. In this way, organizations may initiate application recoveries from a more recognizable view. SLAs may then be associated with these application-centric views. SLAs are used to manage data protection expectations across these products and implement the appropriate policies to enforce compliance.

NetVault XA Supports Data Protection with Needed Data Management and Recovery Capabilities

Organizations for years strove to use the right data protection to backup and protect their various applications. Now that they have largely accomplished that goal, they need a similar solution to support their various data protection solutions and provide a better means to centrally manage and recover the data these products contain.

Using NetVault XA, organizations get the platform they need to achieve this new objective. NetVault XA permits Dell customers to leave their existing data protection solutions in place while getting new flexibility to manage them more effectively and recover more quickly. In so doing, they lay the foundation to meet the next generation of recovery expectations that business owners are coming to possess. ■

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