



International charity uses Databarracks for backup and DR

Save the Children UK raises hundreds of millions of pounds each year to help children all over the world lead better and safer lives. The organisation conducts charitable activities helping the most marginalised children in 120 countries.

The Challenge

While the organisation's focus has not changed in almost a century, the way in which it manages the raising of money and administration of aid all over the world has. Technology plays a massive role in Save the Children's operations. The organisation relies on its technology and IT infrastructure to run in the same way as any modern global corporation.

Save the Children was backing up its data to tapes which were taken offsite by a third party tape collection and storage company. Its Disaster Recovery arrangements were also no longer adequate.

"Our tapes were being taken to a depot in East London in an area susceptible to flooding. We asked the tape storage company to move them to another location, but that ended up being in Heathrow which has another set of risks attached,"

Andrew Brenson, Head of IT at Save the Children

"We wanted to move to a more automated, offsite backup solution but had a number of specific requirements.

"Although we were planning to upgrade our bandwidth, initially the backup solution would have to work over a relatively small internet connection. We operate a mixed environment with physical and virtual servers as well as Oracle and SQL on the database side so we needed compatibility for them all. We are also always keen to minimise or avoid the presence of third party software agents where possible. What we wanted was software that could achieve these objectives with as small a footprint as possible."

To meet these requirements Save the Children chose a backup solution using the agentless Asigra software, optimised for 'incremental-forever' backups.

Databarracks installed a high performance HP DL380 server with over 3TB of usable storage on site for Save the Children.

The purpose of the local server is to run the agentless Asigra backup software taking any operating overhead away from the production servers. The local server is also used to hold a cache of backups onsite for network speed restores.

“ We were never happy with where our offsite backups were being stored. ”

Andrew Brenson, Head of IT, Save the Children

The Solution

With large volumes of data to protect, Save the Children needed a system that could distinguish between older static data and more critical recent data from the Oracle and SQL databases or its Exchange cluster.

Databarracks used the BLM (Backup Lifecycle Management) functionality of the Asigra software to tier storage for 'Live' critical data and 'Archive' data – more closely aligning the cost of storage to the value of the data.

“When we analysed the data we hold, it is actually only a small fraction that is changing every day. A big portion is completely static. We still need to keep that data, and it needs to be protected, but in a disaster, it is a much lower priority than getting something like the fund raising database back online.”

In addition to streamlining and updating the backup process, Save the Children needed to improve Disaster Recovery operations.

“Most systems are hosted onsite at our UK HQ in Farringdon. If we had an incident in the building or the server room then the impact on our work would be significant. With such a large volume of data and number of servers, restoring onto cold standby hardware at a DR site would take longer than the organisation was comfortable with.”

Save the Children engaged Databarracks to provide Disaster Recovery as a Service alongside the backup solution.

“The cost to replicate all systems to another site for redundancy and DR is just too high for us. On the other hand, the time to restore all of our data and setup the network again would be far too long. Disaster Recovery as a Service was a perfect solution.”

“We can now have users fully operational within hours. In addition, by using Citrix for remote access we get the benefits of remote working when we really need it.

Andrew Brenson, Head of IT, Save the Children

“Recent changes in technology and improvements in bandwidth costs have made a real difference to what is now possible for backups and DR.”

“I wanted our Server team to be adding value to the organisation, not checking backup logs or shifting tapes,” reveals Brenson, “Using Databarracks, we now have access to excellent technology as well as secure and resilient hosting.

The Results

In a disaster, data is restored into a preconfigured virtual environment. The Asigra backup software allows for physical to virtual recovery (P2V) ensuring all of Save the Children's servers can be restored. With the restoration occurring at the data centre, Recovery Time Objectives are vastly reduced.

Users are able to access the VDR environment via Citrix. Using thin client technology removes the need for any pre-configuration of desktop computers or the need for a standby site. Each user needs only a device with a web browser to connect and can continue to access applications as normal.

“More importantly, we have a company we can trust to look after it all and let us get on with what we should be doing

Andrew Brenson, Head of IT, Save the Children



Databarracks | Arxcis House | 9 Park Hill | London SW4 9NS
t: +44 (0) 800 033 6633 e: info@databarracks.com www.databarracks.com



Databarracks provide the most secure and supported cloud services in the UK. In 2003, we launched one of the world's first true managed backup services to bring indestructible resilience to mission critical data. Since then we've developed a suite of services built with superior technology, support and security at their core. Today, we deliver Infrastructure as a Service, Disaster Recovery as a Service and Backup as a Service from some of the most secure data centres in the world, 30 metres below ground in ex-military nuclear bunkers. We back this up with unbeatable support from our team of handpicked experts. There's no such thing as 'above and beyond' for our engineers because they only work to one standard: to keep your systems running perfectly. Databarracks is certified by the Cloud Industry Forum, ISO 27001 certified for Information Security and has been selected as a provider to the G-Cloud framework.

