



CRACKING THE CASE ON DATA STORAGE AND BACKUP

On Site E-Discovery, a provider of litigation support services, saw its data storage needs increase by a factor of 50 in just three years. But with solutions from Open Systems Solutions, Inc. (OSSI), it was 'case closed' on data storage and backup.

Law firms and corporate legal departments are among the most demanding consumers of data. In an era of Sarbanes-Oxley and heightened corporate accountability, those demands are only increasing. A single legal case can involve literally tens of millions of files -- e-mail, financial records and even paper documents converted to digital images.

Now imagine you have to manage the data for not one case but thousands of cases for hundreds of law firms, corporations and other organizations. That's the challenge of On Site E-Discovery, a provider of litigation support services such as electronic discovery, digital imaging and computer forensics.

Among the nation's top providers of discovery services, On Site has developed proprietary technology to recover crucial evidence from a variety of systems and media. In fact, the company has built its reputation on offering industry-leading technological competence.

So when On Site saw its data storage needs explode from 1 terabyte (TB) to nearly 50 TB in just three years, it knew a more sophisticated approach to data storage, management and backup was needed.

That's why On Site turned to data storage specialist OSSI. OSSI was already providing On Site with robust data storage solutions -- solutions that are still delivering return on investment.

To meet On Site's new requirements, OSSI provided the company with highly reliable disk subsystems, tape libraries, a Storage Area Network (SAN) and a high-performance backup and recovery solution. As a result, On Site is better able to manage its mission-critical data, respond to changing customer needs and grow its business.

"Court cases require instant access to detailed and accurate data that goes back 10 years or more," says Jeff Fehrman, Director of Information Technology for On Site. "We realized that we needed the performance and scalability to accommodate rapidly growing amounts of data. That's when we called OSSI."

DATA ON TRIAL

Legal cases today can involve dizzying amounts of data. Defendants must sometimes turn over millions of relevant documents, a process called "discovery." Law firms and corporate legal departments increasingly rely on litigation support providers such as On Site that specialize in the discovery process.

In the past, the discovery process was paper-intensive because most documents were in paper form. Today, more than 90 percent of new material is electronic. And increasingly, even paper documents must be converted to a digital format.

On Site pioneered many of the tools and technologies that fostered the growth of the e-discovery industry and best practices. According to the company, it has handled some of the largest e-discovery projects ever undertaken.

With data storage demand rapidly outpacing capacity, On Site's reputation was at stake. What's more, it was taking longer for the company to complete data backups -- a crucial step in protecting its mission-critical information. "Our biggest problem was scalability," Fehrman says, "because our storage needs can grow so quickly. We needed a solution that could grow with us."

ORDER IN THE STORAGE

On Site worked with OSSI to analyze its data storage needs. The challenge was to develop a solution that not only met its immediate requirements but also could accommodate growing demands over the next 12 to 24 months.

"We try to anticipate our future storage needs, but it can be difficult, because some cases are very data-intensive, and some

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On Site E-Discovery*

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On Site E-Discovery*

can drag on for years," Fehrman explains. What On Site needed was flexibility and scalability to adapt to sometimes unexpected changes.

OSSI helped On Site consider its options and select a solution. "We determined which disk subsystems and tape library would best fit with our environment," Fehrman reports. "We

then developed a deployment plan." The solution was put in place for a 45-day evaluation period. "Based on our positive experience, we decided to go ahead with full-scale deployment," Fehrman says.

OSSI installed StorageTek FlexLine disk subsystems at On Site's headquarters in Alexandria, Va., and other locations throughout the United States. The FlexLine subsystems offer a range of options for adaptable storage. They provide robust performance for On Site's mission-critical applications, plus high levels of reliability and data protection.

OSSI then worked with On Site to deploy SANs in its Alexandria, Chicago and New York locations. High-speed networks of shared disk devices, the SANs make all the storage devices available to all the servers on the local-area network. They allow On Site to recover quickly in the event of a disk failure, and to avoid downtime for reconfiguration as storage needs grow.

The final step was to identify a solution that would allow On Site to back up its data quickly. "Many enterprises work with large databases that grow over time. Those are relatively straightforward to back up," Fehrman explains. "On Site has an average of 160 million files across eight servers. Most of them are electronic images of paper documents. It's a big problem to back up all those small images."

So big, in fact, that it took up to five days to back up servers, each of which had to handle 10 million to 20 million individual files. "If you can't back up all your data in one day, then you never get the next day's data backed up, and you're continually falling behind," Fehrman says.

OSSI met this challenge by installing and integrating a CommVault QiNetix Galaxy Backup & Recovery system. The solution provides fast and reliable data backup in On Site's heterogeneous environment. It also allows policy-based actions to be enforced across all operating environments, applications and storage types that simplify the management of On Site's storage network.

FRIEND OF THE COURT

The results were dramatic: a 400 percent reduction in backup times, from five days to under 24 hours. What's more, OSSI gave On Site a flexible, scalable storage environment. "Any one of our client's cases can grow to involve multiple terabytes," Fehrman says. "We can't be constrained by our storage performance or capacity."

Just as important, the deployment process was minimally disruptive to On Site's business. "We're a 24/7 operation," Fehrman notes. "OSSI worked with us to ensure that we had minimal downtime."

That spirit of working together pervades On Site's relationship with OSSI. "With OSSI, we have a real relationship of trust," Fehrman says. "I can pick up the phone and call them any time, and I know they won't try to sell me something I don't need. I know they're looking out for our best interest, and they value their long-term relationship with us."

On Site is continuing that relationship as it works with OSSI to develop a solution for information life-cycle management (ILM). ILM can maintain the bulk of On Site's data on lower-cost media, dynamically copying the data to fast disks as needed. As a result, it can keep storage costs low while ensuring fast access to important information.

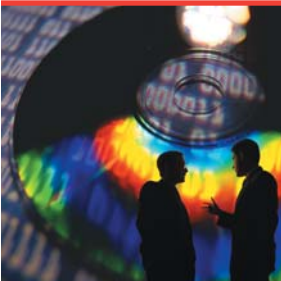
Fehrman advises organizations to work with an integrator such as OSSI "from the beginning of your storage project. If you try to do too much on your own, you'll have to go back later and make changes. And that will cost you more in the long run," he says.

"OSSI has been instrumental in helping us with our storage and backup needs," Fehrman concludes. "The solutions provided by OSSI allow us to achieve performance and capacity increases whenever we need them. And that allows us to respond quickly to meet the needs of our customers."

CASE CLOSED!

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