

SPHiNX AUTOMATES DISASTER RECOVERY FOR FORESIGHT FINANCIAL GROUP

Foresight Financial Group

www.foresightfg.com

Industry

Finance

IT Profile

IBM Power Systems with IBM i
(SYSTEM i, iSERIES, AS/400)

Benefits

- Seamless installation
- Compliance standards met with Replication and backup
- Faster backup processes and ease of recovery with advanced automation



THE CHALLENGE

DISASTER RECOVERY IN A REAL-TIME BANKING WORLD

When it comes to finance, the rules that govern banking practices and ensure the integrity of bank data must be followed precisely. IT is no exception. That's why Foresight Financial centralizes IT for community banks that otherwise wouldn't be able to house the robust infrastructure needed to maintain sensitive data and comply with FFIEC regulations. Foresight consolidates IT operations for five banks across twelve locations in its IBMi environment, giving these individual banks the opportunity to benefit from enterprise-level performance without the enterprise cost.

"Our Internet banking product is real-time. We couldn't afford any downtime," said Aaron Patterson, CIO at Foresight. Foresight previously executed its backups via an IBM LTO-4 library, but retrieving data from the physical library was challenging. If data needed to be recovered, it would require close to an entire day for recovery, without a 100 percent guarantee. With a 99 percent virtualized environment and the need for 24/7 availability, Foresight required a real-time method to access backup data in the case of an emergency.

THE SOLUTION

SPHiNX VIRTUAL TAPE APPLIANCE

Foresight discovered SPHiNX through their partner, North American Systems International. SPHiNX is a virtual tape appliance that offers complete disaster recovery (DR) with consolidated backups. For Foresight, SPHiNX simplified backups via virtual tape and expedited data recovery.

SEAMLESS INSTALLATION

First, Foresight needed to know that any changes to their environment would not hinder the real-time Internet banking operations. The SPHiNX system seamlessly integrated with Foresight's existing IBMi environment. Patterson said that he was even able to keep the same device name and standards that were already in place. The smooth transition enabled Foresight to enhance their DR infrastructure without interrupting ongoing procedures and processes. "The device was up and running and ready to go in 30 minutes," said Patterson.

"SPHiNX has been a big help with our DR site. SPHiNX can automate the entire backup, send data over the wire and the virtual tape at the DR site is ready and can be recovered immediately."

- Aaron Patterson, CIO at Foresight

COMPLIANCE STANDARDS MET WITH REPLICATION AND BACKUP

Patterson had already deployed a replication solution for high availability (HA) backups, but knew this was not sufficient for total DR preparedness. "If you already have system to system replication, most people think you wouldn't need SPHiNX for backups. But the truth is - you do. If you only use replication, you could replicate an entire corrupt database and have no way to get back your original data," Patterson explained. If production data is corrupt and replicated, there is no way to recover the data without SPHiNX. Independent from the high availability backups, SPHiNX automatically sends data over the WAN to the offsite DR SPHiNX unit via a secure encrypted link. This ensures that data is backed up at regular daily intervals. Now, all Patterson has to do is point and click, and the virtual tape is mounted, the data accessible.

For compliance reasons, Foresight must keep logs of who executes backups along with where and when tapes are accessed. SPHiNX helped take hours off of the process of maintaining these records with automated logging. Patterson said, "I used to stay up at night worrying about if our logs were ok. Now, SPHiNX does that automatically." Additionally, SPHiNX's built-in data encryption using the Advanced Encryption Standard (AES) with a 256-bit key length ensures that Foresight is able to automate secure transfer, adding yet another DR element that Foresight no longer has to manually monitor.

FASTER BACKUP PROCESSES AND EASE OF RECOVERY WITH ADVANCED AUTOMATION

The most important aspect of backing up data is actually being able to access your DR data. With SPHiNX, Foresight can leave behind the cumbersome method of recalling physical tape from an offsite location, which could take up to two hours or more. Now, all Patterson has to do is just point and click; the virtual tape is mounted and ready to go. Recovery can happen from a remote site with no geographical barriers to DR data availability. "SPHiNX has been a big help with our DR site," said Patterson. "SPHiNX can automate the entire backup, send data over the wire and the virtual tape at the DR site is ready and can be recovered immediately." Advanced DR automation with SPHiNX shaves one and a half to two hours of work off Foresight's weekly backups, which include 60-70 gigabytes of new data every evening. By compressing the data, Foresight is able to move information very quickly.

THE BOTTOM LINE

COMPLETE DR FOR BUSINESS-CRITICAL DATA

With a robust, enterprise-level IT environment, Foresight ensures the integrity of data for thousands of accounts across its five banks. Seamless installation into the IBM i environment along with automated encryption and logging allow Foresight to stay online and reduce the time and resources devoted to backups and DR, while improving the

recoverability of business-critical banking data.

ABOUT ETI-NET AND SPHiNX

ETI-NET is the worldwide leader in backup of critical data for industries that never stop. We develop software which allows NonStop servers to access modern storage technologies. Now in our third decade of operation, ETI-NET enjoys a reputation for delivering leading-edge components to major data-centers globally.

ETI-SPHiNX, a subsidiary of ETI-NET, meets the specific needs of corporations, remote offices and data centers by providing a holistic data protection solution that saves money, time and resources. Offering complete disaster recovery capabilities for mid-range server and open system host environments, SPHiNX also scales easily to grow with your business. As a primary repository for backups, SPHiNX can be used as secondary tiered storage for replicated data to meet disaster recovery requirements.

ABOUT FORESIGHT FINANCIAL GROUP

Foresight Financial Group, Inc., an Illinois corporation founded in 1986, is a financial holding company established under the Federal Reserve with eleven offices in the Northern Illinois counties of Winnebago and Stephenson. Its mission summary is "Community Building Through Community Banking."



ETINET.com/PRODUCTS/GSERIES



505 Maisonneuve West, Suite 400
Montreal, QC H3A3C2, Canada
ETINET.com/SPHiNX
1-514-395-1200

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