

METRO NEWS CASE STUDY

Metro News stays agile, and responsive to change

Metro News started in 1995, and is the largest international newspaper in the world. More than 67 Metro editions are published in 22 countries and 200+ major cities across Europe, North & South America and Asia.

In Canada, Metro is the most read national daily newspaper brand, and the first national daily to publish in both official languages. Their publications are available in print, online and mobile. And they offer local coverage across the country, in Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver and other areas.

Metro's Canadian operations faced a number of unique IT management challenges.

Due to the nature of their industry, demand for Metro's services have a tendency to spike in times of natural disaster or other unpredictable crises. Because of this the company needs to eliminate unplanned downtime and respond quickly to unanticipated events.

News organizations also need to maintain constant flow within their value chain, with strict JIT requirements. Unanticipated downtime can cause downstream bottlenecks and interruptions that can hurt relationships with their reader base and advertisers.

Maintaining consistent uninterrupted workflow and disaster protection can be very difficult for companies, like Metro News, that maintain many remote locations with complex heterogeneous IT environments.

In Canada alone, Metro News must maintain protection, compliance and continuity – for Linux, Windows file servers, MS Exchange, MS SQL, Active Directory, laptops, desktops and other IT systems – across many different physical locations.



Although the company had a secure and consistent DR plan in place, the maintenance of these supporting systems could be complex, expensive, and time-consuming.

Much of this complexity was due to the fact that their off-site backup and disaster recovery plan was based on a slow, error-prone manual process that consumed valuable IT time, caused employees to work late, and delivered very little value to the organization. And in the event of a major disaster, the manual shipping and recovery of off-site tapes could cause delays in the recovery process.

Over the long-term, the management team at Metro News anticipated significant change within their IT infrastructure. These changes might possibly require a complete overhaul of their backup, compliance and DR processes. This overhaul could possibly lock up critical IT resources, and many other internal IT projects would need to be placed on hold until the new system could be deployed. As a result, business continuity would become a strategic constraint that could reduce flexibility and growth across the entire company.

Metro News needed to take urgent action to address these issues, and the window of opportunity was closing fast. That's when Metro News decided to contact Storagepipe.

The Solution

Before coming to Storagepipe, Metro News had delegated backup and business continuity work to each of their remote office locations and they were quickly approaching the limitations of their existing systems.

The cloud offered 2 significant advantages over their internal tape-based processes.

- First, cloud backup and recovery offered limitless scalability.
- Second, a fully automated cloud solution could protect data without manual handling of tapes.

Metro News chose Storagepipe because they have a long track-record of success since 2001. Also, Metro News appreciated the fact that Storagepipe offered a wide spectrum of services, including proprietary and managed third-party solutions.

Since backup, compliance and disaster recovery had become bottlenecks in their IT processes, Metro News wanted to consolidate and delegate these functions. With a heterogeneous IT environment, they wanted a single provider to offer comprehensive protection for their Linux, Windows file servers, MS Exchange, MS SQL, Active Directory, laptops, desktops and other systems. They also wanted complete protection for all of their remote office locations, through a single trusted provider.

By consolidating all of these processes, hundreds of manual tasks – performed across many locations – were converted into only a few tasks that are much easier to manage.

In order to ensure maximum resiliency and speed of recovery for their servers, Metro News wanted to maintain a combination of on-site and off-site backups with disaster recovery capabilities. This was

originally accomplished using Storagepipe's Backup and DR Appliance for physical systems. In the event of an emergency, the Storagepipe DR Appliance was available for quick recovery of their file servers, databases and other systems in order to minimize unplanned downtime and service interruption.

In the event of a major disaster, Storagepipe also maintained off-site server images which could be loaded within Storagepipe's datacenter or at a new staging site.

Storagepipe also provided Metro News with a fully-automated, easy-to-use backup solution for their laptops, desktops and mobile devices across the organization. These backups were consolidated to a single centralized administration interface, ensuring protection from loss, theft, accidental deletion, viruses and user error. The Storagepipe service also made file recovery effortlessly intuitive, which minimized support calls.

For regulatory compliance, Metro News needed to maintain an additional WORM (Write Once Read Many) archiving process, in addition to their backup and disaster recovery. Storagepipe was able to integrate these archives directly into the backup cycle, eliminating the need for multiple processes.

An important benefit of Storagepipe's service was the incredible support from dedicated, experienced, full-time backup and disaster recovery professionals. Monitoring and testing of backups had previously been complex, expensive and time-consuming. But with Storagepipe, emergency recovery drills became a smooth, stress-free experience that could be executed without impacting any other IT work.

Since they began working with Storagepipe, Metro News has undergone major changes in their IT infrastructure, and Storagepipe has adapted smoothly while eliminating capital risk for Metro News.

Over the years, Metro News has migrated most of their physical servers into virtualized environments. While compliance, business continuity and data protection can usually cause bottlenecks with these kinds of major IT changes, Metro News was able to offload all of this work onto Storagepipe's shoulders.

In the event of a disaster, virtual machines can be quickly loaded onto new hypervisors, run directly from Storagepipe's Veeam DR Appliance, or hosted within Storagepipe's DR Cloud. And as always, Storagepipe still maintained an integrated archiving process to WORM media.

Unlike a self-managed implementation, the smooth outsourced execution of these changes freed up IT time to ensure that the migration project could be accomplished ahead-of-time and under-budget.

Storagepipe also provided Metro News' IT department with a number of interesting new capabilities. With Veeam's verification capabilities, Storagepipe could create automated routines which would load, run and test backup images in order to verify their consistency. Testing could be done more often, and with less human interaction. Also, major changes could first be tested in a hosted replica of the live production environment for testing, before deployment into production.

Overall, Storagepipe has adapted very well to the rapidly changing needs of Metro News, and has allowed IT to keep ahead of the pace in this fast-changing business environment.

In Summary

By working with Storagepipe, Metro News was able to delegate IT work that did not require deep knowledge of internal business process, and have this work done in parallel by a trusted partner. As a result, they minimized complexity and eliminate bottlenecks from their IT workflow.

Metro News was able to implement IT projects more rapidly, add value, and achieve greater overall ROI on IT investments.

If there is a major change in the way Metro News implements their IT systems, it's Storagepipe's job to ensure that the data protection and business continuity capabilities also adapt to this change and scale with growth. This is all done with minimal work from Metro News, and without capital risk or significant increase in costs.

As an added benefit, Metro News has become more effective in their ability to respond to disaster. In the same way that patients benefit from the fact that their doctors treat other patients, Metro News benefits from the fact that Storagepipe's team performs real-world disaster recoveries every day. This level of expertise is very difficult to duplicate with a self-managed backup implementation.

About Storagepipe

Since 2001, Storagepipe Solutions has been a pioneer in the field of off-site data protection.

In that time, Storagepipe has led the industry in expanding their suite of disaster recovery, regulatory compliance, and business continuity solutions in anticipation of rapidly-changing data management trends.

Result & Metro News Testimonial

“Storagepipe has kept our IT efforts nimble, and has also enhanced and accelerated the value delivered across all new IT initiatives. By letting Storagepipe manage our backups, we’re also able to ensure fast and consistent recovery in the event of any major data disaster.”

JEFF DONALDSON / CIO
METRO NEWS