

Connexions (Staffordshire)

Breece Hill Provides Hassle-Free Network Backup with iStoRA D2D2T Appliance

BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Connexions is a government support service in England tailored to the needs of young people. Through 47 local partnerships and an interactive web site, Connexions offers integrated information, advice, guidance and support to 13-19 year olds (and young people with disabilities up to age 25) throughout England. The service offers young people access to a Personal Adviser (PA) to help them navigate their way through life's decisions and realize their potential as they move into adulthood. To support its daily operations, Connexions managed a Microsoft Windows network, utilizing 14 separate servers including an Exchange server and SQL server. The company secured its data using NT Backup software on DDS4 drives locally mounted on each server. Each day, full backups were run requiring manual intervention to start each backup process. Connexions assigned a dedicated IT manager to administer its backup operations. With growing volumes of data, Connexions discovered its backups were becoming increasingly difficult to manage. The amount of information on half of its servers exceeded one tape cartridge causing backup operations to stall until a second tape was inserted. This manual intervention did not typically take place until the next business day, delaying the backup process. Connexions looked to streamline and automate its data backup to minimize the load on its IT staff and improve process efficiencies. The company turned to storage specialist NCE Europe to develop a solution that would address these unique business needs.

Key Business Challenges

"As a service organization, our data must be up-to-date and readily accessible. Breece Hill's D2D2T appliance allows us to quickly and accurately store data to disk and convert it to tape for disaster protection. By integrating all components, we can now manage the backup process with minimal IT intervention."
Gregg Barnett,
IT Support, Connexions

- Increasing volumes of data resulting in a longer backup windows
- Tape technology that did not scale to the growing backup requirements
- Administrative burden of excessive manual processes
- Ineffective processes due to delayed backups

Because of Connexions' limited IT staff, NCE wanted to implement a solution that would be easy to operate and manage. From its portfolio of products, it chose Breece Hill's iStoRA™ appliance. Unlike other products, the iStoRA provided a fully integrated disk-to-disk-to-tape (D2D2T) platform, with all components tested and qualified to work together. Using best-in-class components – Veritas backup software, Intel server, Hitachi disks and HP tapes—iStoRA would eliminate many of Connexions' current IT headaches and protect their business-critical information with ease.



BREECE HILL SOLUTION

Connexions installed Breece Hill's iStoRA appliance and saw immediate benefits. The system, utilizing Symantec|Veritas Backup Exec, eliminated the need for full daily backups. Instead, the software performed one full backup each week. On Monday, the system backed up 400 GB of data. Tuesday through Friday, it performed incremental backups—backing up only the files that changed since the previous incremental process. With fewer files needed to be run—200 GB typically—the backup time was significantly reduced. Connexions also achieved optimal performance utilizing Breece Hill's D2D2T architecture. For daily backups, the system backed up data to its 8 SATA disks. With increased disk performance, backups went from 6 hours per server to complete to only 8 hours total, saving the company 75 hours of backup time. Connexions now transfers data from disk to tape over the weekend for off-line storage. Finally, Connexions is able to reduce its media requirements with the iStoRA appliance. With the previous tape technology, Connexions utilized 20 tapes a week to meet its backup requirements. With the iStoRA, it could now protect the same amount of data using 4 tapes—2 daily and 2 weekly. Consequently, Connexions saved media costs and administrative time.

BUSINESS RESULTS

" Breece Hill's iStoRA appliance was the perfect fit for Connexions. The solution was easy to manage, reasonably priced and provided the full functionality for a growing business."

John Greenwood,
Product Sales Director,
NCE Europe

Using Breece Hill's iStoRA, Connexions was able to meet its growing data protection challenges and streamline its backup processes. It received:

- Easy and intuitive administration freed IT staff for strategic programs
- Shortened backup windows by a factor of five
- Incremental backups reduced the amount of data and tapes being processed by 400%
- Backup time fell from 84 hours to 8 hours
- Increased data protection with up to 2TB of storage space allowed for future data growth, with additional scalability

ABOUT BREECE HILL

Breece Hill, a leader in data protection solutions for small to medium size businesses and workgroups, provides integrated data protection servers, optical technologies, autoloaders and tape libraries covering the wide variety of customer requirements. Since 1993 more than 25,000 units have been shipped worldwide. Breece Hill distributes its products through worldwide distribution, reseller and OEM channels. To learn more about Breece Hill's data protection solutions, visit www.breecehill.com.

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