

## Symantec LiveState Recovery 6.0

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**Abstract:** Being able to quickly, easily and consistently re-create a Windows system after a catastrophic failure has been all but impossible, until now. Symantec LiveState Recovery 6.0 not only makes it possible, it makes it a mandatory decision.

### The Problem

Windows machines have proliferated like wildfire in most enterprises. They also are the machines most susceptible to outside attack and internal failure – simply because of their volume. Rapid recovery from faulty patches, worms & viruses, human error, hardware failure, physical destruction has been a pipe dream for most shops, even those who currently run bare metal restore products unless identical hardware has been available to bring up the “ghost” machine. This has led to almost countless downtime even in the best-run shops, and an outright nightmare in the normal IT world – and that’s just for local outages – you might as well forget about remote outages.



### The Answer, Finally

LiveState Recovery 6.0 is a disk-to-disk solution that addresses all these issues and more. First of all, the product provides a volume (image) based restore of everything – applications, OS (with all the latest installed updates) and data if you wish. It can restore to completely dissimilar hardware – it doesn’t need to restore to an identical machine. Even better, it can protect and restore to/from virtual machines – via integration with VMware.

### How It Works

Volume Recovery Point agents are installed on any machine you want protected – servers, workstations, desktops or laptops. The entire server is then captured as a single compressed portable file, creating a unique point-in-time (PIT) recovery point (i.e., an image-based snapshot of the entire volume or volumes). Since the volume recovery point is captured “hot”, you don’t have to shutdown critical applications during backups (VSS is also supported for creating consistent recovery points for Microsoft

SQL Server, Exchange, Active Directory, etc.). Incrementals are also supported for minimizing storage requirements and speeding up subsequent backups. You can then store that recovery point file anywhere you want, on a NAS box, a SAN somewhere, remotely, etc. In case of failure, you simply run the recovery environment, which is a wizard-driven, WinPE-based kernel that contains all the tools/drivers, etc. necessary to restore the entire server from bare metal – on like or dissimilar hardware. So now whether the system is infected by a virus or simply blows up, you can instantly pick whatever recovery point you want, point the new machine at it, and off you go with a clean restoration of

the entire server. And you don't have to incur the hassle and expense of keeping identical standby machines in your closet, just waiting for a possible failure.

If you'd like to restore to a dissimilar machine, you must buy the Restore Anywhere Option. The RAO also includes a VMware conversion tool that lets you restore to/from a virtual machine – a fantastic new feature since many shops don't want to have machines sitting around doing nothing while waiting for a failure – they can simply bring up a new virtual machine and recover to it, saving tons of time and money.

The virtual tools also allow you to go “both ways” – from a virtual machine partition to a standalone physical server. For example, you could use this capability to migrate the restored production system from its virtual instance to a dedicated physical machine at a later time, for higher performance.

In QA/test environments, you can use this to create point-in-time snapshots of your production servers, and then test software upgrades and patches on virtual machines that are exact replicas of your production servers, after which you can then migrate the upgraded (and hopefully debugged) versions back to your standalone physical servers.

## What Else?

LiveState Recovery 6.0 is now integrated with Backup Exec 10d. That means you can now automatically ship recovery point files to tape (which can then be stored offsite, for example) via Backup Exec. This combination of LiveState Recovery and Backup Exec allows you to create a complete disk-to-disk-to-tape (D2D2T) process for bare metal system restoration.

(Note that LiveState Recovery 6.0 is being announced simultaneously with Backup Exec 10d, which provides continuous data protection (CDP) and Web-based end-user file recovery – see separate brief.)

LiveState Recovery 6.0 also supports unattended restoration of servers at remote sites (including blade servers) via the LightsOut Restore Option. This new option uses integrated pcAnywhere technology to remotely control the recovery process, during which the recovery environment is initiated either from a local drive partition or downloaded over the network via PXE (Pre-boot eXecution Environment, a standard network booting protocol defined by Intel).

LiveState Recovery 6.0 also enables you to create “consistency groups” whereby LiveState Recovery will snap multiple volumes at the same consistency point (using VSS) so users with multi-volume transactional systems (such as Exchange or SQL, etc.) can restore entire systems consistently. The product also supports rapid recovery for Active Directory servers by immediately synchronizing with Active Directory after restoration (using Domain Controller trust tokens). The LiveState Recovery Manager option provides centralized, policy-based management (auto-discovery of unprotected systems, centrally specifying backup parameters such as scheduling and compression for groups of similar machines, compliance reporting, etc.) and now includes the ability to centrally specify storage locations for recovery points to optimize network load, and control both CPU and network throttling.

The product also supports SNMP for integration with standard management consoles such as Tivoli, HP OpenView, etc.

Finally, LiveState Recovery is part of a family of solutions, based on a common LiveState architecture that also includes modules for system provisioning and configuration management, patch management, asset management, and remote control.

## The Bottom Line

I can't come up with a good reason *not* to want this product. Desktop pricing starts at \$69 per machine and desktop packages (including LiveState Recovery, Restore Anywhere, and LiveState Recovery Manager) are only \$99 bucks. The big iron suite for protecting servers includes LiveState Recovery Advanced Server, Restore Anywhere (for hardware-independent restoration and virtual support), Lights Out Restore (for remote recovery), and LiveState Recovery Manager, and it's only \$1,695 per server. The downtime this can and will avoid will more than pay for the cost of the product. I expect more integration with other Symantec products down the line, so you can imagine enhanced security features rolling out shortly. All in all, this is a winner.

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