

Bright House Networks

Providing Full Data Protection Support for Microsoft Exchange Server 2007, Symantec Reduces Backup Time by 64 Percent and Administration Time by 50 Percent



To improve email performance, fast-growing Bright House Networks upgraded to Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 with 64-bit architecture and chose Symantec Backup Exec 11d because it provides full support for data protection in the Exchange 2007 environment. The result is 64 percent faster backup time, a 50 percent reduction in backup administration, the end of complaints about slow email performance, and 100 percent payback within days.

ORGANIZATION PROFILE

Bright House Networks (www.mybriighthouse.com) serves over two million customers with video, voice, and data services in central Florida, Indianapolis, Birmingham, Detroit, and other markets.

INDUSTRY

Media and Entertainment

SOLUTION

Data Protection

Many challenges. One man.

More than two million customers count on Bright House Networks for high-speed data, video and voice services in markets such as Tampa Bay, Orlando, and Indianapolis.

Serving these customers, Bright House employees count heavily on email, Microsoft SharePoint, and instant messaging applications—and the one person at Bright House assigned to keep these applications available and backed up. He's Lance Wilson, manager of messaging services. As you'd expect, he's busy.

Wilson's success in his job depends heavily on having messaging solutions that are robust, reliable, easy to administer, and highly automated.

It's time to upgrade

During 2006, fast-growing Bright House passed the 7,000 email user mark, and strained the capacity of its four-year-old messaging infrastructure. Email performance slowed, despite a significant investment in two additional email servers. At least one or two users called the help desk each week to complain about email application delays.

Rather than just add more email servers, Wilson decided to upgrade from 32-bit Microsoft Exchange Server 2003 to 64-bit Microsoft Exchange Server 2007. He wanted a solution that would enable him to double his email user base without adding new hardware. He asked HP and GreenPages Technology Solutions, two of his vendors, to design and implement the new solution.

“Symantec Backup Exec 11d is giving us the data protection we need to upgrade to a Microsoft Exchange 2007 64-bit solution. Email performance has improved for our 7,500 users. That has meant 100 percent payback within days.”

Lance Wilson

Manager of
Messaging Services
Bright House Networks

Bright House can now recover individual email messages, SharePoint documents or Active Directory accounts in just minutes, without rebooting.

Turning to Symantec because it offers full support

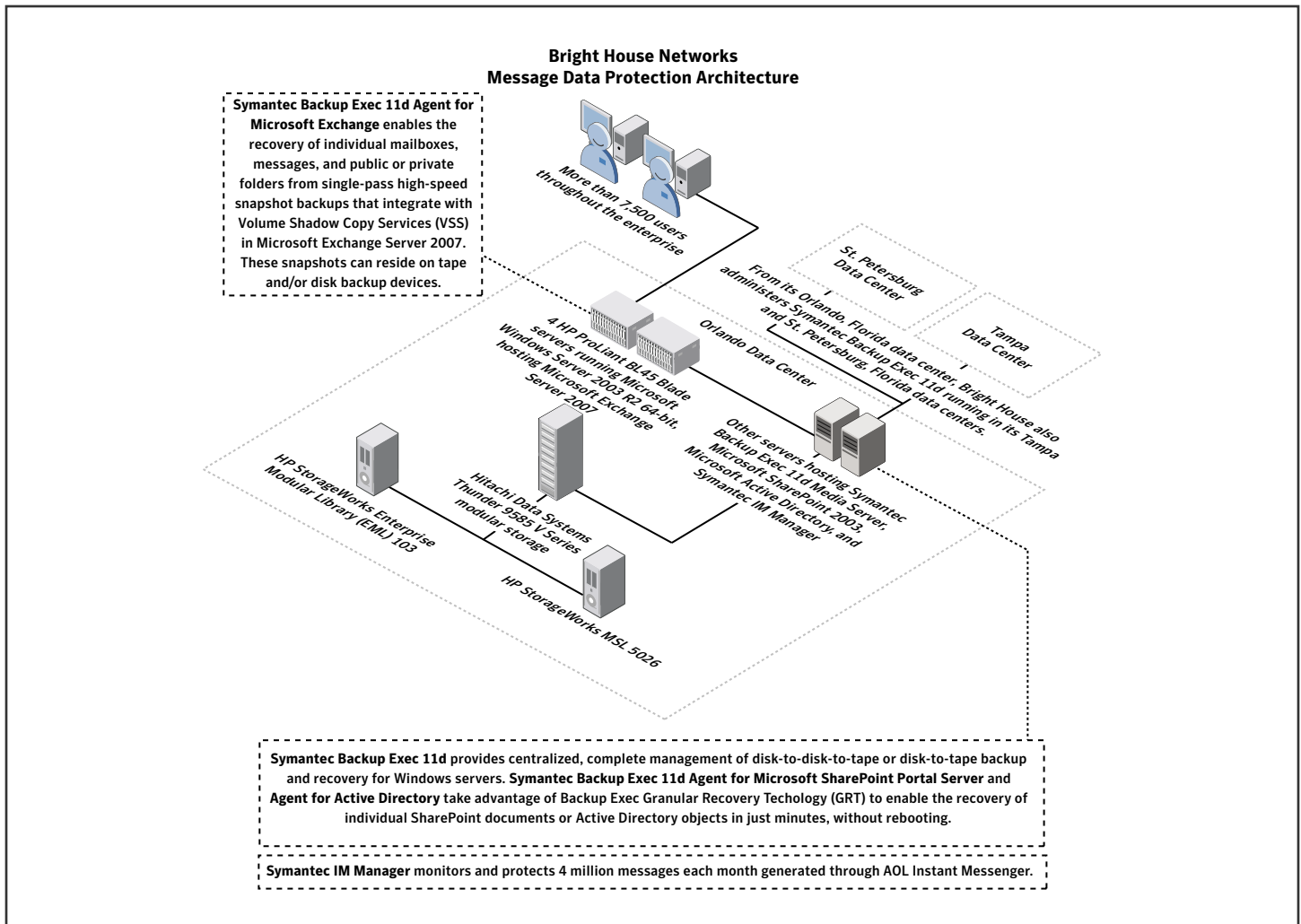
As Wilson studied his alternatives, he attended a panel discussion hosted by HP and a webinar hosted by GreenPages Technology Solutions discussing migration to Microsoft Exchange Server 2007. At both events he heard recommendations to protect and recover data in that environment using Symantec Backup Exec™ 11d—because it fully supports data protection in Microsoft Exchange Server 2007.

Wilson needed to deploy his new email solution a few weeks before the version of Backup Exec 11d that supports Exchange 2007 was released. During those weeks he protected email using Microsoft Windows backup tools (formerly known as the Windows NT Backup Utility).

To power Bright House's new email solution, partner HP also recommended and helped deploy 16 new HP ProLiant BL45 Blade servers running Microsoft Windows Server 2003 R2 64-bit. "HP has been invaluable improving our infrastructure. Our new servers enable me to scale easily and double capacity without new hardware," Wilson says.

Email moves faster and backups are easier

The new email infrastructure at Bright House Networks went into production in March, 2007. Before that, users had been calling the Orlando help desk about slow email performance at least once or twice a week. The complaints stopped, and now Wilson hears praise instead.



Bright House also started using Symantec Backup Exec 11d, saving time in several ways. Backup Exec runs a full backup of Exchange 2007 50 percent faster than Windows backup tools, copying data at 1.4GB/minute instead of under 1GB/minute.

Symantec Backup Exec 11d also integrates with Microsoft Volume Shadow Copy Services (VSS) instead of the legacy extensible-storage engine (ESE) API that some competitive backup solutions integrate with. Full VSS integration is the backup approach recommended by Microsoft. Backup is performed from a single-pass high-speed VSS snapshot. As a result, full backups of Bright House's 200GB email store complete 64 percent faster, in 65 minutes instead of three to four hours.

Recovery is faster, too

Another benefit is that exclusive granular recovery technology (GRT) in Symantec Backup Exec enables Bright House to recover a single object, such as an email message, without having to rebuild an entire email database in order to retrieve it.

Wilson extends Backup Exec's GRT technology with Backup Exec Agents for Microsoft Exchange Server, SharePoint Portal Server, and Active Directory. These give him the capability to recover individual email messages, SharePoint documents or Active Directory accounts in just minutes, without rebooting, instead of spending as long as a day to restore an entire database in one of these applications in order to retrieve an individual object in it.

Symantec Backup Exec 11d also reduces Wilson's administration time. "I was spending two hours a day administering backup before. Backup Exec cuts that in half," Wilson says. A key reason is that Bright House no longer needs to conduct a second mailbox-level backup, because of Backup Exec's full integration with VSS snapshots of the email database.

SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

Business Drivers

- Support rapid growth by improving email performance
- Enhance service levels by improving data protection and recovery
- Increase operational efficiency with secure instant messaging

Technology Challenges

- Upgrade email infrastructure with Microsoft Exchange Server 2007
- Help ensure that Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 has full data protection
- Enable granular recovery of email messages, Microsoft SharePoint documents, and Microsoft Active Directory accounts
- Improve recovery times
- Minimize data protection staff time
- Control and protect instant messaging services

Solution

Centralized, streamlined, and scalable data protection and instant messaging security

Symantec Products

- Symantec Backup Exec™ 11d with Backup Exec Agents for Microsoft Exchange Server, SharePoint Portal Server, and Active Directory
- Symantec™ IM Manager 8.1

Technology Environment

- Applications: Microsoft Exchange Server 2007, AOL Instant Messenger, Microsoft SharePoint 2003
- Server Platform: HP ProLiant BL45 Blade servers running Microsoft Windows Server 2003 R2 64-bit
- Storage: Hitachi Data Systems Thunder 9585 V Series modular storage
- Tape Library: HP StorageWorks Enterprise Modular Library (EML) 103, HP StorageWorks MSL 5026

Symantec Services

- Symantec Essential Support Services

Symantec Partners

- HP (www.hp.com)
- GreenPages Technology Solutions (www.greenpages.com)

“I was spending two hours a day administering backup before. Backup Exec cuts that in half.”

Lance Wilson

Manager of Messaging Services
Bright House Networks

“We couldn’t have done this email upgrade without HP and GreenPages Technology Solutions. Both companies have been extremely valuable with best practices, design recommendations, and deployment help.”

Lance Wilson

Manager of Messaging Services
Bright House Networks

BUSINESS VALUE AND TECHNICAL BENEFITS

Email Performance/Scalability

- No user complaints about email performance, down from 1-2 calls per week
- Ability to quickly scale, double their existing user base, without adding hardware

Data Protection and Recovery

- Ability to deploy Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 knowing it is fully supported in data protection by Symantec Backup Exec 11d
- Ability to restore individual messages, SharePoint documents, and Active Directory accounts within minutes

Operational Efficiency/Savings

- 64% faster backup time (3 hours reduced to 65 mins.)
- 50% reduction in backup administration time, from 2 to 1 hours a day
- 100% payback within days

Security

- No disruptions from malicious code while monitoring millions of instant messages a month
- 100% control of user access to instant messaging

Getting control of instant messaging

Another challenge Wilson faced was the need to monitor and control the company’s growing instant message (IM) traffic.

Bright House employees generate millions of messages a month through AOL Instant Messenger. Wilson must ensure that only approved screen names get access to the application. He gains that control through Symantec IM Manager software, a solution he began using when it was known as IMlogic, before Symantec acquired it in January, 2006.

Besides providing access control, Symantec IM Manager also screens the millions of messages that employees generate for malicious code, and has prevented disruption from malicious code through the IM channel. The solution also has the capability to archive messages and make them searchable for compliance and eDiscovery.

Partners make the difference

“We couldn’t have done this email upgrade without HP and GreenPages Technology Solutions,” Wilson says. “Both companies have been extremely valuable with best practices, design recommendations, and deployment help.”

At GreenPages Technology Solutions, Mario Brum, director of data management solutions, has been working with Bright House for three years. “We seek to be vendor-neutral,” Brum explains. “We evaluate and present various solutions and make a recommendation to our clients. In this case, it was Symantec Backup Exec 11d. We hosted a Webinar on Backup Exec and it was attended by 119 of our clients—a large number for a Webinar. Out of that event came our validation that Backup Exec has evolved into an enterprise product. One of the people listening was Lance Wilson.”

Wilson sums up the results: “Symantec Backup Exec 11d is giving us the data protection we need to upgrade to a Microsoft Exchange 2007 64-bit solution,” he says. “Email performance has improved for our 7,500 users. That has meant 100 percent payback within days.