

Intermedia

Protecting the global leader in cloud services and world’s largest provider of hosted Microsoft Exchange using Veritas Solutions

As the world’s largest provider of hosted Exchange services, Intermedia wanted to offer Exchange 2010 as a cloud service on the day that Microsoft released it—and needed to be able to protect the new application’s data. The data protection solution that Intermedia was using at the time would not be ready. Therefore, Intermedia turned to Veritas for a solution that has scaled to protect four petabytes of data with 99 percent backup and recovery success rates, helping new mailbox sales grow by 40 percent compared to a year ago.

Bleeding edge?

When a technology vendor offers a new solution, the difference between representing the leading edge of technology or the bleeding edge can be a thin one. Attempting to navigate this difference is the only way to win big—but it can also be a way to lose big.

Microsoft has been taking this risk for decades with many of its major releases. In the email market, for instance, it owns a 65 percent share with Microsoft Exchange Server. Exchange 2010 gives users the flexibility to mobile-sync to hundreds of devices, simplify management, and easily share free/busy calendar information with users at other companies. When the product was introduced in 2009, it represented a major step forward.

Intermedia wanted to be right out on the leading edge with its partner Microsoft by making Exchange 2010 available immediately as a cloud service. “As the world’s largest provider of hosted Exchange services, we wanted to be first to market with Exchange 2010,” says Paul Schandel, systems administrator at Intermedia. It’s the type of achievement that has helped Intermedia win the Reader’s Choice award from the expert community at MSExchange.org.

Who has your back?

Before Intermedia could make the new solution available, however, it needed to minimize risk for its customers. Schandel called Veritas. Intermedia had already deployed Veritas NetBackup™ at its newest data center. “Veritas told me that a NetBackup beta for Exchange 2010 was underway, and it would go gold the day that Microsoft released the product,” Schandel says. “I said ‘great!’ and we signed on.”



INTERMEDIA

Organization profile

Website: www.Intermedia.net
Industry: Technology
Headquarters: Sunnyvale, CA
Employees: 300

Veritas solutions

Data Protection

Strategic IT trends

Cloud

Why Veritas?

- Earlier support for the latest releases of software
- Listens to, understands, responds to, and supports customers better
- Easier to administer
- More reliable

Intermedia worked with the NetBackup beta and reported any issues it found to Veritas. "Within a few months, our customers were migrating to 2010 rather quickly," Schandel recalls. "The size of their databases was growing exponentially. We found perhaps five bugs in NetBackup. Every time we raised a concern, Veritas got it. They understood. They took what we said to heart and got fixes out quickly."

There was no bleeding. "We use Veritas NetBackup to protect roughly 3,000 Exchange databases—over four petabytes of data in seven data centers, with 99 percent accuracy on backups and 99 percent success rate on recoveries," Schandel says.

Intermedia has deployed a NetBackup master server in each data center and retains a week's worth of customer data by running it straight to tape. "I'd be surprised if Veritas has another customer that backs up as many Exchange databases as we do," Schandel observes.

Standardizing on NetBackup

Veritas NetBackup went from protecting five percent of Intermedia's Exchange environment in 2009 to 100 percent three years later. "NetBackup is now our standard for data protection," Schandel says. "We wanted one platform across the board. We don't want to think about two different products."

Two factors were key in deciding to make NetBackup the standard. "We really do believe that when we see something in NetBackup that we'd like to improve on, Veritas listens," Schandel says. "They come on site and listen to us. They created conference calls to take our input and feedback. They did demonstrations to show us the road map for NetBackup. They made us feel like they have our best interest at heart."

Solutions at a glance

Key challenges

- Standardize on data protection platform that can scale for 4 PB environment
- Increase backup and recovery reliability
- Minimize IT staff time dedicated to backups and restores
- Deliver high service standards to help business grow

Veritas products

- Veritas NetBackup™ with
 - Agent for Microsoft Exchange Server
 - Agent for Microsoft SQL Server
 - Shared Storage Option

Veritas services

- Veritas Business Critical Services Advanced Access
- Veritas Education Services

Technology environment

- Server platform: Dell PowerEdge running Windows Server 2008 R2 and 2003 on VMware vSphere 4
- Applications: Microsoft Exchange Server 2010, 2007
- Databases: Microsoft SQL Server
- Storage: EMC CLARiiON, EMC VNX, Hitachi AMS
- Tape libraries: Dell PowerVault ML6000, Quantum Scalar i500, Quantum Scalar i6000

Business results and technical benefits

- Ability to scale to protect 4 PB, fast growing environment
- 99% backup success rate
- 99% recovery success rate for 20 to 30 recoveries a week
- Faster resolution of critical support calls
- 40% higher new mailbox sales supported by reliable data protection service

Veritas Business Critical Services delivers

Another reason for the switch is technical support. "Veritas Business Critical Services Advanced Access makes a big difference for us," Schandel says. "With Veritas Business Critical Services, I reach a level-two technician on the first call in a short amount of time. Paying that little extra has really paid off."

By using NetBackup, it's also easier for Schandel to find experienced administrators, he says. His new assistant has considerable NetBackup experience, and has optimized the product as a result. "As time has progressed and the NetBackup releases have improved, I honestly can't remember the last ticket we had to open," he says. "Veritas Business Critical Services is becoming more and more like an insurance policy."

"We use Veritas NetBackup to protect roughly 3,000 Exchange databases—over four petabytes in seven data centers, with 99 percent accuracy on backups and 99 percent success rate on recoveries."

Paul Schandel

Systems Administrator
Intermedia

Day-to-day administration is simpler. “The NetBackup console gives us more information for each job than the NetWorker console did,” notes Schandel. “It’s better at estimating when a job will be completed, which helps us because we have a lot more jobs running.”

Backup is running well, reports Schandel. “We have NetBackup OpsCenter configured to proactively alert us of any errors,” he says. “And now we’re going two or three days at a time without getting any sort of notification at all. It’s really been running smoothly.”

Three of Intermedia’s seven data centers have upgraded to NetBackup 7.5. “We’re looking forward to taking advantage of the NetBackup Search feature in NetBackup 7.5,” says Schandel. This feature indexes file system metadata that is associated with backup images. As a result, searching for needed information in backup images is now simple, powerful and fast. It’s a useful feature when there are legal holds: when relevant information is found, an administrator can take actions within NetBackup 7.5 that protect the data from inadvertent deletion, or expiration based on retention policies.

Useful learning

To get more information on how to administer Microsoft Windows Server-based backup, Schandel took a five-day NetBackup class. “The Veritas Education Services instructor was great,” Schandel says. “He made himself available by email after the class, and he’s helped me several times since.”

Schandel appreciated learning more in the class about how to use the command line instead of the GUI. “You can’t beat the command line for troubleshooting and getting things done fast,” he says. “We learned how to configure hardware and set it up smoothly and easily.”

Enhancing data protection

Intermedia uses the NetBackup Agent for Microsoft Exchange Server to get complete, nondisruptive protection of Exchange databases, including mailbox-level backup. The team also uses the NetBackup Agent for Microsoft SQL Server to enable point-in-time recovery of SQL databases.

The NetBackup Shared Storage option enables Intermedia to share tape drives across NetBackup media servers and the SAN, increasing tape drive utilization, increasing fault tolerance, and lowering the total number of drives required.

The payoff is big

Numbers are showing that Intermedia has what customers want. “We grew from 300,000 to 400,000 premium Exchange mailboxes in only 10 months,” Schandel notes. “New mailbox sales are up 40 percent through the third quarter of 2011 compared to the same period in 2010. More than 80 percent of mailboxes created are from new customers coming to the cloud from on-premises servers. And current customers are adding an average of about 70 percent more Exchange mailboxes and services than they were two years ago.”

Being on the leading edge is paying off. “Given how fast we continue to grow,” says Schandel, “the confidence we get from Veritas NetBackup is a good feeling.”

For more information

Contact your local Veritas Sales Representative or Business Partner, or visit our website at www.veritas.com.

Veritas World Headquarters

500 East Middlefield Road
Mountain View, CA 94043
+1 (650) 933 1000
www.veritas.com

“With Veritas Business Critical Services Advanced Access, I reach a level-two technician on the first call in a short amount of time. Paying that little extra has really paid off.”

Paul Schandel

Systems Administrator
Intermedia

“The Veritas Education Services instructor was great. He made himself available by email after the class, and he’s helped me several times since.”

Paul Schandel

Systems Administrator
Intermedia

“As time has progressed and the NetBackup releases have improved, I honestly can’t remember the last ticket we had to open.”

Paul Schandel

Systems Administrator
Intermedia