

ITS Group Consulting Offers “More 9’s” and Killer RTO/RPO with Replay Appliance

Background

ITS Group hosts Microsoft Exchange for the SMB market and leads larger clients through Exchange 2003 to Exchange 2007 transitions. ITS Group gives its customers a clear value statement: it offers greater Exchange availability than Microsoft’s own hosted Exchange solution. By leveraging Replay Appliance, ITS Group can offer a higher SLA. Used to backup, protect, restore, and ensure high availability of hosted e-mail and implemented during Exchange transitions, Replay Appliance allow ITS Group to provide a 99.999% uptime guarantee. With Replay Appliance’s unique technologies, ITS Group can tout a RTO (Recovery Time Objective) and RPO (Recovery Point Objective) of 30 minutes or less under any disaster scenario.

**Replay Appliance,
“It worked exactly as
advertised”**

— **Mitch Chen**
CTO, ITS Group Consulting

The Move Away from Tape

Like all companies that use e-mail, ITS Group’s SMB client’s demand constant availability and reliability. Since many small companies don’t have the in-house expertise to carefully manage critical e-mail systems, ITS Group provides a hosted Microsoft Exchange platform, backup, high availability, and disaster recovery. Larger clients maintain their own internal Exchange environments but ITS Consulting helps them with the complicated transition from Exchange 2003 to Exchange 2007 leaving behind protection, availability, and disaster recovery capabilities that they continue to service.

ITS Group had been relying on tape backups to protect Exchange data but, as Mitch Chen, ITS Group’s CTO points out, “Tape backups fail 38% of the time.” Mitch heard about Replay Appliance while consulting with a large financial firm and ran an evaluation. “It worked exactly as advertised,” says Mitch. “I’ve run messaging systems for 20 years and Replay Appliance is the best insurance policy that money can buy.”



Killer RTO and RPO

“I’ve seen every kind of backup product and Replay Applmage is exactly what it’s cracked up to be.”

— **Mitch Chen**
CTO, ITS Group Consulting

Replay Applmage uses a disk-based approach to protect the entire Exchange application, not just the data. All that boils down to one simple result: ITS Group can restore an Exchange server under any level of outage in less than 30 minutes. Since Replay Application Standby for ESX continuously updates an offline copy of your Exchange servers as a virtual server image, services can be back up at a moments notice even with a catastrophic failure. Under DR tests, Mitch found that an Exchange server with Replay Application Standby for ESX offers a 20 minute RTO for message level recovery. RTO for corrupted info stores, corrupted storage groups, and server operating system corruption can happen in less than 15 minutes.

Offering outstanding RPO (recovery point objective) is just as important. When Exchange comes back on line, customers want to resume e-mail right where they left off, or very close to it. Replay Applmage delivers very low RPOs for ITS Group customers across situations. Chen’s Replay Applmage RPO estimates are as follows:

message level recovery	15 min
corrupted info store	0 min
corrupted storage group	> 5 min
server OS corruption/hanging	>15 min

“If traditional tape backup is your disaster recovery strategy, Microsoft best practice is to create a blank information store and provide users with “dial tone” while the administrator restores to a recovery server then copies the data back into the users mailbox. “Having been through countless messaging disaster recovery events, a tape strategy is a nightmare. If the tape even restores correctly, it will take days to get everyone’s historical email back into their mailboxes with a 250+ person organization.” states Mitch.”

Great for ITS Consulting, Even Better for the Client

It’s always great when technology gives a service provider both operational and selling advantages. That’s what Replay Applmage is doing for ITS Group. “Replay Applmage is delivering huge value in our data center where it’s all about power and cooling,” reports Mitch. “AppAssure not only runs as a virtual server, but we used it to convert our Exchange servers into virtual servers to really reduce the overall datacenter footprint.” Replay Applmage’s ability to restore messages and systems quickly and with little effort also allows ITS Group to grow its customer base while keeping overhead low.

“Replay Applmage is also great on the sales side,” says Mitch. “It let us add nines to our uptime level and really helps out larger clients who are managing their own Exchange environments. Replay Applmage is so easy to use that anyone can do it. Email disaster recovery is usually so complex that success or failure depends upon one or two Exchange administrators. This is not a good scenario for any company.”

Mitch also points out that Replay Applmage is great insurance for sites that are not transitioning to Exchange 2007. “Standard support for Exchange 2003 ends on April 14 of this year,” says Mitch. “If you have an enterprise agreement, you can extend support but it will cost \$30,000 - 50,000 annually. If something goes wrong with your 2003 environment and you can’t restore or roll-back, how are you going to explain that to the CEO?” Replay Applmage will protect Exchange 2003 while allowing users to roll-back if, as Mitch puts it, “something blows up.”

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