

Great Things Happen on the Road to Disaster Recovery

Background

Raycom Media is one of the country's largest broadcasters, owning and operating 46 television stations in 35 markets and 18 states. Raycom stations serve over 12% of US television households and are staffed by 3,500 employees. All those employees access email, financial systems, human resources and other core corporate applications located in the company's Montgomery, Alabama headquarters. Should those core systems fail, all business transactions at the 46 remote locations would be severely impacted. Television programming would air, but payroll, financial systems, inventory management, and e-mail would be very limited if not totally inaccessible. David Burke, Raycom Media's CIO, and his team went to work on a strategy for fast, reliable disaster recovery and, with the help of Replay Applmage, realized even more benefits.

"We downloaded the Replay Applmage evaluation and loved it."

— David Burke
Raycom Media

First concern: Disaster Recovery

While Raycom Media is a large company, with 3,500 employees distributed over a large geographic area, its IT department is fairly small. Charged with every aspect of IT, from designing and managing a network infrastructure, deploying and supporting end-user systems, implementing corporate applications, ensuring security, and planning for the future, the IT group led by David Burke is always looking for efficiencies.

They were especially worried about their ability to get systems back up and running very quickly in the event headquarters was hit by a disaster.

"All of our employees, in every location, rely on centralized corporate systems – financial and business databases, applications, and e-mail," explains Burke. "We're in the process of building a disaster recovery site about 100 miles away from headquarters. In the event of disaster, our plans are to reroute all employees to that location and get them back up and doing business. We realized that driving over there with stacks of backup tapes would work, but getting everything restored would take way too much time."

While he and his team were thinking through better options, Burke received an e-mail from AppAssure that directed him to a Replay Applmage evaluation. "We downloaded the Replay Applmage evaluation and loved it," said Burke.



Collateral Benefits: Fast Data Protection

“We’re in love with how Replay Applmage works with Exchange.”

— **Jim Upchurch**
Senior Systems Administrator,
Raycom Media

Burke’s team realized that they could immediately use Replay Applmage to streamline their normal, everyday application backup processes. Jim Upchurch, Senior Systems Administrator, had been using another backup and restore solution to protect Microsoft Exchange data. He found immediate efficiencies with Replay Applmage. “We’re in love with how Replay Applmage works with Exchange,” says Upchurch. “Our restore processes used to be extremely complex. Every time we needed to restore data we had to call technical support so they could talk us through the procedure. That was making us pretty nervous – what would happen in an emergency?”

Upchurch found Replay Applmage’s GUI very easy to work through and quickly used it to restore a lost e-mail message. “I kept thinking ‘That’s it?’ he remembers. While they haven’t had to restore an entire Exchange server, the Raycom Media IT team has used Replay Applmage to restore single messages and public folders. “The real time savings is in restore,” says Upchurch. “We’ve traded hours on the phone for just getting it done.”

Raycom Media is also using Replay Applmage to restore SQL servers running applications that can’t be backed up by SQL itself. “We run some applications that don’t support transaction logging and use Replay Applmage to keep those backed up,” explains Steve Sills, the Database Administrator on Burke’s team.

Back to Disaster Recovery

Burke and his team are still developing their alternate site for disaster recovery. Their everyday use of Replay Applmage has assured them that it will do exactly what they need it to do – speed recovery and limit downtime.

Now that they’ve experienced Replay Applmage’s reliability, Burke says they’ll be basing their disaster recovery strategy on Replay Applmage. “We’re going to be able to clone our servers and just bring them up in our alternate location,” says Burke. “End-users shouldn’t even know what happened.”

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