City of Suffolk Greatly Reduces Data Recovery Time with Cohesity

INDUSTRY
Government

USE CASE
Backup and Recovery, Dev/Test

SOLUTION PARTNERS
Cisco UCS, Nutanix, VMware

CHANNEL PARTNER
CDW

INTRODUCTION

The City of Suffolk, Virginia is located in the Hampton Road metropolitan area of the state and includes the cities of Chesapeake, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Virginia Beach. The population of the City is approximately 90,000 and is the largest city in Virginia by boundary land area with attractive destinations and prosperous business opportunities.

CHALLENGES

The IT team for the City of Suffolk is tasked to manage infrastructure across all City departments, including public safety, geographic information systems, and the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office, along with a host of other traditional services.

The main data center is at a secure location and there are 30 additional buildings throughout the City connected by fiber infrastructure. Two additional data center sites are located within close proximity for data replication and disaster recovery (DR). In the last several years, Suffolk began to make some changes in its server architecture moving toward Cisco UCS for phone servers and Nutanix for its VDI environment.

"Cohesity has met and exceeded our expectations. With global data reduction at 26x, Cohesity is nothing like other solutions we've tested that pale in comparison and is a one-stop shop for managing data. We have now consolidated our backup and recovery environment to a single pane of glass, enabling simple administration and effortless management."

CHARLIE HARCUM,
Network Manager

The City was experiencing pain points when it came to reliable backups and recovery, and the existing combination of Dell Quest Rapid Recovery, NetApp, Tintri, and Data Domain was becoming overly cumbersome to manage. The IT team had a document for backup instructions with five sections alone for physical and virtual backup processes. Managing SLAs was more and more difficult and the City also faced challenges with a variety of infrastructure platforms, including the inability to fully protect its Linux environment. With a disjointed management approach and increasing complexity, the City needed a solution for modern backup and recovery and the assurance to be able to solidify its DR plan.

The City of Suffolk looked for the following capabilities in a data management solution:

- Simplified and consolidated enterprise backup and recovery solution in a single platform to eliminate failures
- Ability to restore a physical server to a virtual environment
- Hyperconverged solution with seamless integration with leading platforms, including Linux
- Meet future cloud requirements and provide flexible solution for DR and dev/test

SOLUTION

The City began to look at new solutions to avoid upcoming renewal deadlines and turned to Cohesity for modern backup and recovery. After a lengthy Proof of Concept (PoC), Suffolk moved forward and deployed Cohesity DataPlatform and DataProtect into production. Even during the PoC, Cohesity proved invaluable, and was able to successfully restore and rebuild a production Exchange server when the IT team was in a serious bind.

The City is using Cohesity as a unified, modern backup and recovery solution, and reusing backed up data for dev/test by setting up a grid lab environment to replicate its entire production environment. The new off-the-grid lab was configured with its own vCenter environment and is a registered source to Cohesity enabling the IT team to create a rapid build environment.

RESULTS

Now with Cohesity deployed, the City has greatly simplified the complexity of its previous legacy environment. The IT team has solved the issue of frequent backup failures and can easily spin up data on the fly as needed. Cohesity's single pane of glass allows the IT team to manage data across its three datacenter locations and meet recovery needs for any department. Cohesity is backing up the entire production environment, from CAD dispatching applications for public safety, to Epicor for Human Resources.

Previously, rebuilding a file or VM would take up to 30 minutes just to locate the files. With Cohesity, the IT team is able to restore a physical server and make it be virtual which took up to 48 hours in its previous environment. Cohesity has the capability for near instantaneous recovery, spinning up a virtual server, backing up its data, and then migrating back over to vCenter in about 15 seconds. This has transformed operations for the City and the time savings for the IT team are monumental allowing the team to focus on other projects.

With Cohesity, the City set up an off-the-grid lab which enables the IT team to replicate production or test servers for a rapid build environment for dev/test. Recently the team tested a Certificate Authority that was set to expire, which is critical for public safety. The City was able to replicate the entire public safety network to test ahead of implementing into production.

A key benefit with Cohesity is the ability for a single solution to manage all environments. The City was unable to back up Linux servers and the IT team wanted to have a solid DR plan in place going forward. Future use cases for Cohesity in the Suffolk environment include leveraging the cloud for S3 object stores, backing up SQL databases in its Exchange environment, and the possibility of using Cohesity to back up CIFS shares off its NetApp for a NAS solution.

The City of Suffolk realized many benefits with Cohesity including:

- Global data reduction of 26x
- Licensing and support cost savings of more than $200K by eliminating legacy infrastructure
- Near instantaneous recovery for files and servers, reducing recovery time from up to 48 hours to less than 30 seconds
- Scale-out architecture ensures future scalability without worrying about the need to 'rip and replace'