Strategic Network Consulting

VISION®
SOLUTIONS

"With Double-Take Move our customers gain peace of mind, knowing that their data is quickly, accurately and reliably migrated with little downtime."

- Nick Hatch, Head of Operations

Project Background

When customers call on Strategic Network Consulting (SNC) to help with server migrations, they expect those migrations to occur quickly, accurately, cost-effectively and with minimal operational downtime. SNC needs advanced migration tools to ensure it can meet those expectations.

Business Challenges

Organisations used to perform migrations by copying everything to tape, transporting the tapes to the new site and loading the data and applications on a server there. That often took a couple of days, during which time operations stopped.

More recently, when customers contracted SNC to perform migrations, SNC used a Network Attached Storage (NAS) device rather than tape. This eliminated the need to unload and reload data to and from tape, but the NAS device still had to be physically transported to the new location.

During transport and until the NAS device was reattached, the new server was configured and the applications were restarted, the customer couldn't use its applications. The result was considerable downtime, which was a problem for any customer that operated seven days a week.

Furthermore, physical transport inevitably led to some jarring of the NAS devices. Occasionally, a device would be damaged and some or all of the data on it would be unreadable. When this happened, the process had to be restarted, further increasing the necessary downtime.

Company Profile

Company name:
Strategic Network Consulting
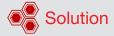
Headquarters:
Essex, UK

Industry:
IT Services

Business environment:
- Founded: 1997
- Offices in Essex and London
- Provides a range of IT support and services for SMEs

Implementation team:
Strategic Network Consulting and Vision Solutions

SNC needed a tool that would allow it to perform migrations much more simply, quickly, accurately and economically—and with an absolute minimum of downtime.

Solution

SNC found the migration solution it needed: Double-Take Move.

Double-Take Move first copies all data, including system settings, from one server to another over standard communication lines. Then, using the same network connection, it keeps the two servers synchronised by replicating changes made on the source server to the target in real time. All of this happens in the background so SNC's customers can continue working the whole time.

By pre-staging data and keeping the old and new servers synchronised, SNC can take as long as necessary to confirm that the new server accurately reflects the old one and is ready to run. SNC then performs a cutover at a time that's most convenient for the customer.

SNC has kept migrations in this synchronisation phase for as long as ten days while the customer's operations continue as normal, with no risk to the accuracy or completeness of the migrated data. Then, downtime is typically limited to just minutes when the cutover is performed through Double-Take Move.

To date, SNC has performed multiple customer migrations using Double-Take Move. The first involved two servers, both of them virtual. The second migration involved seven servers, including a mix of physical and virtual servers.

This brings up an important point about Double-Take Move. It can migrate servers between any combination of physical, virtual and cloud platforms.

Double-Take Move allows SNC to complete migrations over the wire even when the customer's bandwidth is constrained. When performing the initial copy, SNC tells Double-Take Move to throttle replication to a speed that the customer's network connection can handle without impeding other operations. This can be adjusted at different times of the day so if, for example, the customer's operations don't use much bandwidth at night, Double-Take Move can increase its throughput during those hours.

During the on-going synchronisation phase, Double-Take Move replicates byte-level delta changes, not whole files or blocks, meaning that very little data has to be sent over the wire. In addition, during both the initial server copy and the synchronisation phase, replicated data can be compressed prior to transmission to further reduce bandwidth requirements.

Nick Hatch, head of operations at SNC, listed the top benefits of Double-Take Move as being simplifying migration processes, reducing labour hours, reducing total time required to perform migrations, reducing downtime, increasing accuracy and ensuring peace of mind.

Based on the success of the completed migrations, SNC "will be using Double-Take for all of our migrations going forward," said Hatch.

Results

- Simplifies migration processes
- Reduces labour-hours
- Minimises downtime
- Eliminates the need to transport media physically
- Provides peace of mind

Technologies

Software:
- Double-Take Move
- Microsoft Windows Server
- Microsoft Hyper-V

For more information: info@visionsolutions.com • visionsolutions.com