



Top advertising corporation takes advantage of Redstor/Equinix link to slash backup times

Clear Channel, one of the world's largest outdoor advertising corporations, reduced its backup windows significantly after taking full advantage of its connections with both Redstor and Equinix.

The company, which runs more than 360 servers in a virtualised infrastructure, spread across data centres in Slough and London, was using the internet to secure 40TB of data with Redstor.

However, Clear Channel is also a customer of Equinix, a co-location provider used by Redstor, so a direct link for their backups was established via Equinix's Cloud Exchange™ Fabric.

With a staff of 5,000 in 22 countries, Clear Channel is glad that backups no longer impact on the company's available bandwidth. There is the added benefit that backups are now more secure and not at the mercy of inconsistent internet speeds.

Ray McGregor-Allan, Infrastructure Services Manager at Clear Channel, said: "We get a very good performing link to Redstor and our backup times went down by a significant chunk."

No longer affected by peak times for internet use

Any Equinix customer can connect to Redstor, simply by setting up an account and using the data centre's ECX™ Fabric portal. After doing this, jobs that were taking Clear Channel more than an hour would typically be completed within 50 minutes. Ray said: "Our internet pipe used to peak out considerably during the day. We upgraded that from 100Mbps to 300Mbps, but as with everything across the internet, it depends on performance at the time. It could be slow or fast, depending on what else was happening.

"We have over 200 cloud services we can consume on Equinix Cloud Exchange™ Fabric and that's a service they can run between two data centres so we can consume cloud services like AWS or Azure over an express route or direct connect. It made sense to do something with Redstor similar to that."

Challenges

- Rapid growth of unstructured data and pressure to complete ad-hoc backups within allocated windows
- Desire to free up all available bandwidth for business use
- Support needed for multiple sites
- Keep data secure

Solution

- Direct link for Redstor backups established via Equinix's Cloud Exchange™ Fabric
- Quick recovery and fast, cost-effective, secure offsite backup

Key Benefits

- Management backup time cut significantly, now averaging less than 50 minutes
- More secure - minimises security threats by bypassing public internet
- Consistent bandwidth - no longer affected by peak internet times
- Rapid recovery
- Dedicated data centres using 256-bit AES encryption

Larger maintenance window to complete ad-hoc backups

The new infrastructure that Clear Channel put in place in its data centres significantly improved performance and reduced pressure on backup windows, but the advantages of accessing Redstor through ECX™ Fabric were still significant. Infrastructure Services Manager Ray McGregor-Allan said: "We reduced how long our backup took and it is good to know we have larger maintenance windows to do ad-hoc backups in a very short period of time.

“ We dedicate the ECX Fabric to Redstor backups so we get the entire bandwidth. We are going to set it to 100Mbps which is perfectly adequate for the changes that we take overnight. It is a perfect size for us.

Freeing up expensive primary storage space

Clear Channel recently moved 13TB of data by backing up locally then shipping the NAS to Redstor and doing incremental backups. Ray said: "That's taken a massive overhead from us."

A lot of this data is historical and Clear Channel will soon free up primary storage space by offloading infrequently used data to the cloud. Archiving with Redstor has zero impact on the end user as replacement stub files appear in the same place and can be streamed back immediately. Ray said:

“ The stubs will be there in case someone decides they want to look at anything and we get that rapid restore as well which is great.

Service resumed within five minutes of decision to invoke DR

Clear Channel had cause to use Redstor for disaster recovery when a cloud service failed. Ray said: "There had been a critical SAN failure. Both controllers had failed on a solid-state disk array so we lost our data. "We had to do some bare-metal rebuild and bring the services we lost back on premise.

“ We pre-prepared the environment, so within five minutes of the leadership team making the decision to invoke DR, I was able to bring the service back using Redstor. That worked extremely well.

Fully secure solution for peace of mind

With Redstor's ISO-certified disaster recovery solution, Ray has the reassurance that, in the event of a ransomware attack or natural disaster, downtime will be kept to a minimum. Only Ray's team at Clear Channel has the encryption key so only they can recover their data. Fully automated, the service provides Clear Channel with reports detailing backup success and failure, enabling true management by exception.

Ray said: "My team has called the support team, mostly for queries on how to do things and they've been most helpful. They resolve things quickly and we've always found them responsive."

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