

Theragenics Corporation, Buford, Georgia

Requirement for a Faster, More Reliable Data Backup Solution Drives Use of Olixir Technologies' Ruggedized Storage Solution in VTL Implementation

Introduction

Theragenics Corporation, a New York Stock Exchange company, is a medical device company serving the surgical products and prostate cancer treatment markets. The company operates two business segments: its surgical products business and its brachytherapy seed business. Headquartered in Buford, Georgia, Theragenics has manufacturing operations in Buford, Georgia; Portland, Oregon; Garland, Texas; and Attleboro, Massachusetts.

With a growing need to back up ever-increasing amounts of critical corporate data, Theragenics sought to transition from their tape-based data back-up system to a virtual tape library (VTL). This move was made to increase reliability and improve efficiencies.

The Challenge: Identify Software and Hardware Components to Implement an Affordable, Robust, Rugged, Scalable VTL Solution

According to Garth Miles, Corporate Director of Information Technology at Theragenics, the company was primarily using a tape-based data storage solution to back-up critical company data. "The problem with that is tapes are so unreliable. We often had to deal with tapes that were corrupt or not working correctly. In this day and age when data backup is so critical, we have to be sure that our data storage solution is reliable. The ability for us to quickly and accurately restore our data or systems from the backup library is critical."

The initial implementation of Theragenics' VTL solution incorporated Microsoft Data Protection Manager 2007 (DPM) and a multiple-bay removable hard drive solution. However, Miles noted that in a VTL solution the ability to remove and transport the individual hard drives, for offsite archival, is key. "The first solution that we used couldn't withstand the handling that was required. Frequent removal and transportation of the drives for data rotation and offsite archival caused hardware failures and drive crashes. In a robust VTL solution, the drives need to be able to take a beating therefore ruggedized drives are required."

Miles initially looked at a storage solution from another vendor, but the solution that met the company's budgetary requirements only provided two read-write drives and, more importantly, only used smaller capacity drives. "Our data capacity requirements are always growing, never decreasing, so we needed a scalable solution that would support our needs well into the future."

The Solution: Olixir Technologies' Mobile DataVault Enterprise

The search for a scalable, ruggedized data storage solution led Theragenics to Olixir Technologies' four-bay 19-inch rack mount solution known as the FastRestore VTL. Offering a better price point, a fast data transfer rate, and much higher capacity drives (up to 2TB currently, and higher in the future), the Fast Restore VTL, populated with Olixir's ruggedized transportable hard drives as data cartridges, proved to be the ideal solution to address Theragenics' needs. Olixir's ruggedized transportable Mobile DataVault 3DX hard drives, which are used widely by the United States military and its allies worldwide, are also the same drives used in the FastRestore VTL solution.

According to Miles, the system was virtually plug-and-play. The FastRestore VTL system was connected directly to the DPM server via an eSATA interface. "DPM is oblivious to the fact that we're backing up to a hard drive and not tape," Miles explained. "The DPM backup process will actually overflow and move on to the next drive, which is what makes having four hard drives so valuable. Over the weekend, I can slot four drives and still have space to backup Monday's data to the same drives."

"We've found the FastRestore VTL to be a great solution," said Miles. "When it comes time to swap out the drives we just shut off the power, open up the docking bay, remove the Mobile DataVault cartridge, put the new one in, close it, lock it, and off you go. And because we're using the ruggedized hard drives, we don't have to worry about bumping or accidentally dropping a drive during the process."

The Results: An Affordable High-Performance, Scalable, Reliable VTL Solution

Transitioning from a tape-based backup solution to a VTL solution utilizing the ruggedized FastRestore VTL has solved the performance and scalability needs identified by Theragenics.

"It has been very successful," stated Miles. "We have run the solution for many complete backup cycles and are also conducting regular monthly backups. We back up in excess of 25 virtual servers once a week and about a Terabyte of information each day to disk."

In explaining the performance increase that Theragenics has received since the transition from the tape-based to disk-based backup systems, Miles stated, "its mind blowing. It is so much faster writing to disk than it is to tape. With the staggering amount of information that we're backing up, the performance increase that we've gained with the VTL solution has helped us to realize significant savings in both time and operational costs. It is important to remember that the volume of information that we need to back up during our static backup window is never going to decrease, it's just going to keep growing."

Having experienced the performance, reliability and time-saving benefits of the FastRestore in the Buford, Georgia, office, Miles anticipates more deployments of the Olixir solutions. "The Olixir FastRestore VTL is working so well for us at our initial installation in Buford, we have purchased a second system and are considering deploying this solution in our other locations, when we refresh our backup equipment."