



Tectrade

Your information partner

Case study: Trowers & Hamlins

Trowers & Hamlins selects Tectrade for its innovative IBM SAN solution

Challenge

Accelerate backup of business-critical data; enable near-real-time replication of data to disaster recovery site; enable a single point of control for backup and recovery of data; significantly increase scalability of data storage infrastructure.

Solution

Trowers & Hamlins worked with Tectrade to implement two SANs based on IBM hardware and software, one for production systems and the other at the company's disaster recovery site. IBM SAN Volume Controller provides asynchronous data replication between the two sites.

Benefits

Virtualised storage capacity can be moved and expanded on the fly, with no interruption to the business; more efficient use of existing and new capacity will reduce long-term costs; new SANs offer significant increase in data read/write performance; backups can be completed outside office hours; data replication ensures faster recovery in the event of disaster.

Trowers & Hamlins is a major law firm based in the City of London, with further UK offices in Exeter and Manchester, and offices in Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Cairo, Dubai and Oman. With a client base that spans the private and public sectors, Trowers & Hamlins offers services covering virtually every aspect of commercial law.

Aiming to accelerate data backups, improve data recoverability, and enhance the availability of core business systems, Trowers & Hamlins worked with Tectrade to deploy a mirrored SAN infrastructure. The solution uses asynchronous replication with IBM System Storage SAN Volume Controller storage virtualisation software, enabling the Trowers & Hamlins backup site to track the production site almost in real time through a relatively low bandwidth connection.

Bob Greenwood, IT Manager at Trowers & Hamlins, comments: "The Tectrade and IBM solution has given Trowers & Hamlins a more scalable storage infrastructure that offers better performance and more reliable backup."

Growing pains

"We had outgrown our direct-attached storage model, which lacked the capacity, performance and reliability to support the growing business requirements," recalls Bob Greenwood. "Our overnight backups were already running well into the following working day, and there was no easy or accurate way to plan our future storage capacity."

Trowers & Hamlins was fighting the rising tide of data by adding more and more disks to individual servers in its data centre, and as a result the processes for backup and restore were becoming more unwieldy, time-consuming and unreliable.

Says Bob Greenwood, "We wanted to replicate our business-critical data from the London headquarters to our disaster recovery site, and it was clear that a storage area network [SAN] solution was the best option."



Head Office and Customer Centre

Godalming, Surrey
Tel. +44 (0)1483 861448
Email. info@tectrade.co.uk

Northern Sales Office

Harrogate, Yorkshire
Tel. + 44 (0)1423 340942
Email. info@tectrade.co.uk

Scottish Sales Office

Edinburgh, Scotland
Tel: +44 (0)131 718 6077
Email. info@tectrade.co.uk

Netherlands Office

Culemborg
Tel. +31 (0)345 547040
Email. sales@tectrade.nl
www.tectrade.nl

www.tectrade.co.uk

Selecting the new solution

Trowers & Hamblins approached IBM for advice and was directed to Tectrade, an IBM Premier Business Partner and storage expert. Following a competitive tendering process with two other providers, Trowers & Hamblins selected the proposed Tectrade solution as offering the highest quality and the closest fit to the business requirements.

“Tectrade’s proposal showed an excellent appreciation of the need to mitigate risk during the crucial data migration stages,” says Bob Greenwood. “Another factor in our choice was Tectrade’s specialist focus on backup and recovery – the other vendors had a broader, and potentially shallower, range of skills.”

Working with Tectrade, Trowers & Hamblins implemented two SANs. The IBM System x servers in the production SAN are connected to an IBM System Storage DS4700 with Fibre Channel disks via dual IBM System Storage SAN Volume Controller (SVC) nodes. The SAN includes an IBM System Storage TS3310 Tape Library and a multi-protocol router that converts the Fibre Channel traffic to IP for transmission to the remote backup site. At the backup site, Trowers & Hamblins runs virtualised servers under VMware, dual SVC nodes, an IBM DS4200 Express with SATA disks, and an IBM 3582 Tape Library.

Says Bob Greenwood, “Tectrade helped us to migrate all the data without the end users even noticing. The planning was excellent, so we knew exactly what to expect, and the migration was surprisingly quick and easy.”

Asynchronous replication with SVC

Tectrade set up asynchronous replication between the two sites via SVC, the first time this approach had been taken in the UK.

“The ease and reliability of the SVC replication is astonishing,” says Bob Greenwood.

SVC will also offer significant advantages in the future, providing a shared pool of storage that can be expanded at low cost and non-disruptively. Furthermore, the large SVC disk cache increases the speed of access to data, enabling better service to end users and faster backups.

