

Customer Location
Brisbane, Australia

Industry
Energy/Utilities

Platform
Microsoft Office SharePoint
Server 2007

Critical Needs

- Efficient, full-fidelity replication of SharePoint data from primary farm to six remote farms across the state of Queensland
- Continued access to SharePoint data even if connection to primary farm is lost in order to meet legislative requirements
- Full system, schedulable backup of SharePoint content and fast recovery

AvePoint Solution
DocAve Replicator
DocAve Backup and Restore

“DocAve, along with AvePoint’s technical support team, helped us develop a plan that replicates our most vital data reliably and efficiently.”

- Group Manager – Information Technology, Xstrata Coal Queensland

Case Study: Xstrata Coal Queensland Meets Legislative Requirements by Regularly Replicating 20 GB of SharePoint Data from Primary Farm to Six Dispersed Farms throughout Queensland with DocAve[®]

Success Highlights

- Developed plan to regularly replicate approximately 20 gigabytes (GB) of SharePoint data from the primary farm to six remote farms with full fidelity in real time to keep intranet data up-to-date
- Allowed continued access to important intranet data in the midst of a disaster scenario after connection to the primary farm was lost during the Queensland floods
- Saved 30% of network engineer’s time for other essential responsibilities due to efficiency and reliability of replication jobs performed by DocAve
- Restored SharePoint farm in two hours and performed full backup of all SharePoint sites on a daily basis

Customer Profile

Xstrata Coal is the world’s largest exporter of thermal coal, and a significant producer of premium-quality hard-coking coal and semi-soft coal. Headquartered in Sydney, Australia, Xstrata Coal has interests in more than 30 operating coal mines in Australia, South Africa, and Colombia, and an exploration project in Nova Scotia, Canada.

The Challenge

A global company with offices and a wide network of knowledge workers spread throughout Australia, Xstrata Coal adopted Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007 primarily to serve as the company’s corporate intranet site, its primary tool of communication with employees. Critical Safety and Health Management System documents are published on the site on a regular basis. The Queensland Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act requires that these documents are available to Xstrata Coal Queensland staff at all times, so it was essential that the intranet site receive the utmost protection and possess ubiquitous accessibility.



At present, Xstrata Coal Queensland has seven separate SharePoint server farms. The primary farm is located in Brisbane and consists of one web front end server, one application server, and one SQL server. Six additional remote farms are dispersed throughout the state of Queensland where the company's mines are located. Due to the aforementioned legislative requirement, Xstrata Coal Queensland's intranet – and the documents it contained – needed to be updated regularly and available for employees to access through their respective farms at all times with absolutely no downtime. In order to satisfy this stringent requirement, Xstrata Coal Queensland administrators needed to replicate the corporate intranet environment with the most up-to-date data from its main farm to its remote farms in real time whenever changes were made.

Administrators attempted to utilise SharePoint's native abilities for replication. "Using Microsoft's native tools to replicate intranet data was challenging," said Xstrata Coal Queensland's group manager for information technology (IT). "The tools did not replicate all content as needed, and consistent problems with the replication meant the remote farms might not always have the exact same, current data as the primary farm."

Since Microsoft's native replication tools were difficult to manage, Xstrata Coal Queensland's network engineer spent approximately 40% of his time troubleshooting replication jobs to ensure intranet data was as up-to-date as possible across all SharePoint farms. Since SharePoint was not the network engineer's sole responsibility, this was a problem. Managing SharePoint data replications was taking a significant amount of time that could have been better utilised carrying out some of the other IT-related tasks the business required.

Since SharePoint's native replication abilities were not meeting Xstrata Coal Queensland's need to keep its intranet data constantly updated amongst dispersed farms, administrators began a search for a third-party software solution.

The AvePoint Solution

Xstrata Coal Queensland administrators surveyed several options and ultimately chose AvePoint's DocAve Replicator for SharePoint due to its feature set as well as local technical and sales support in Australia. DocAve Replicator is part of the DocAve Software Platform, which integrates more than 30 independently deployable modules which function within a unified, browser-based interface and fully distributed architecture, but can also be purchased and deployed independently. DocAve Replicator performs live, event-driven, as well as scheduled, or offline replication. Synchronisation and management of all content, configurations, and securities is performed with full fidelity.

Because replicating SharePoint data was of utmost importance for Xstrata Coal Queensland, administrators worked closely with AvePoint's technical support team to develop a seamless replication plan that would ensure intranet data was replicated fully and employees would be able to access important documents at all times. "We were happy with the assistance we received from AvePoint's technical support staff," the group manager said. "The staff is knowledgeable, experienced, and capable of delivering the solutions we need." In addition to DocAve Replicator, the replication plan involved DocAve Backup and Restore, which addresses the need for a fast, flexible, and intelligent backup solution for SharePoint.

Using DocAve Backup and Restore, administrators were able to carry out a full platform backup of SharePoint and take a point-in-time "snapshot" of Xstrata Coal Queensland's primary farm, which would become the basis of the data replication. From there, DocAve Replicator could replicate the data exactly as captured from the primary farm to the six remote farms.

As was required, the data, approximately 20 GB, was replicated entirely and with full-fidelity on a consistent basis, so Xstrata Coal Queensland was able to meet legislative requirements without issue. Additionally, DocAve allowed administrators to automate the



replication process and allow replications to occur in real time whenever updates were made, ensuring even all users had 24/7 access to the most up-to-date business-critical information while saving administrators a significant amount of time. "Instead of spending 40 percent of his time on SharePoint replication as Microsoft native tools required, our network engineer now spends only 10 percent on replication tasks," the group manager said.

DocAve also helped Xstrata Coal Queensland in a disaster scenario. The historic flooding in Queensland in early 2011 caused Xstrata Coal Queensland's remote farms to lose connection to the company's primary farm in Brisbane. "Since all SharePoint data was fully replicated by DocAve before the flood, the data could be accessed in 'read-only' mode from each remote farm continuously while we worked to reestablish connection to the main farm," the group manager said. "Replication jobs began again as soon as connection to the main farm was reestablished, but we were still able to meet the requirement for uninterrupted access to important information from all farms while connections were down, which was extremely valuable to our business."

Xstrata Coal Queensland also used DocAve Backup and Restore to protect its farms' data. DocAve provides full-fidelity backup and recovery, from an individual content item to an entire SharePoint environment and all of its farm-level components, maintaining all metadata, securities, and version histories. With DocAve's convenient scheduler, Xstrata Coal Queensland performed daily full backups on all sites. When one of the servers in the company's remote farms in Newlands died, DocAve's data restoration capabilities helped bring SharePoint back online smoothly and swiftly. "It took me a day to rebuild our Newlands server, but, thanks to DocAve, I was able to restore the SharePoint farm in only two hours," Xstrata Coal Queensland's network engineer said.

The Bottom Line

With DocAve in place, Xstrata Coal Queensland now has the replication and protection plans its most important SharePoint data requires. Vital intranet data is kept up-to-date amongst the company's dispersed farms at all times, and, therefore, legislative requirements are met. Additionally, DocAve's reliability and flexibility allows the company's network engineer to save 30 percent of his time on a regular basis, which can be used to carry out other tasks essential to the company's IT infrastructure each day.

"Law required us to have up-to-date data available to our employees at all times," said the group manager. "DocAve, along with AvePoint's technical support team, helped us develop a plan that replicates our most vital data reliably and efficiently."

About AvePoint

AvePoint is a global technology company and proven software leader. Since its founding in 2001, AvePoint has become the world's largest provider of Enterprise-Class Governance and Infrastructure Management solutions for Microsoft SharePoint. Propelled by the world's largest SharePoint-exclusive research & development teams, AvePoint helps more than 8,000 customers – including many Fortune 500 companies and government agencies – meet their specific business objectives utilising the SharePoint platform. AvePoint, Inc. is headquartered and maintains its principle engineering centre in Jersey City, NJ, with wholly owned sales and engineering centres in the USA, Canada, Australia, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Japan, Singapore, Sweden, and China. AvePoint is a Depth Managed Microsoft Gold Certified Portals and Collaboration Partner and Gold Certified ISV Partner as well as a US Government GSA provider via strategic partnerships.

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