

Newsworthy instant VM restores



Customer profile



Software | United Kingdom



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Business needs

To assure data availability for their publishing-industry customers, PCS Publishing protects their virtual infrastructure with a solution they can administer easily through vCenter. They replicate their data between two virtual data protection appliances in real time, enabling instant recovery of virtual machines and their data.

Business results

- Restores virtual machines in seconds
- Automates virtual machine discovery and protection policy management
- Achieves 94.6% - 96% deduplication
- Enables single-pane-of-glass administration via vCenter

Solutions at a glance

- [PowerProtect appliances](#)
- [Data Protection Suite](#)
- [PowerProtect Data Manager](#)
- [RecoverPoint for Virtual Machines \(RP4VMs\)](#)
- [VMware](#)

A lot has happened in the world in the last 47 years, and for all that time, PCS Publishing has been helping news organizations cover it. Based in the U.K., PCS provides newspaper and magazine publishers with software that helps them be more productive. Says Dave Chapman, Senior Technician at PCS, “As technology has evolved, so have the solutions we’ve built for our customers so they can make the most of the advancements.”

PCS’s suite of software products helps publishers automate formerly manual tasks. And behind the scenes, PCS is automating data protection tasks with the help of a Dell solution.

Serious Business

“The data we protect at PCS is our virtual infrastructure,” says Chapman, “which is for all of the newspaper customers we host. Our multiple systems, from editorial to advertising to circulation systems, are all hosted here on our infrastructure, which is why it’s so important that they’re protected. It’s all Dell infrastructure, from our four networks, to our building network switches. Our compute and our storage are all Dell EMC products.”

Recently, PCS invested in the full Dell EMC Data Protection Suite, which has improved reliability, says Chapman. “Before, we were relying on snapshots for backup and replication. That was okay until we had corruption in a volume and this corruption was passed on to our snapshot. We had to recover machines from our replicated data, which cost us a lot of time.”

PCS has deployed Dell EMC PowerProtect DD Virtual Edition (DDVE), one in each of its two data centers, and they replicate between the two DDVEs.

Chapman notes that for PCS customers, data availability is literally serious business. “For the newspaper industry, timeliness is vital to competitiveness, so we need instant recovery of virtual machines. With RecoverPoint for VMs, we have replication running in real time, and can bring a machine up instantly if we need to.”



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Feature Stories

Dell EMC PowerProtect Data Manager saves PCS time and simplifies their admin workload through its native vSphere integration with vCenter. “Before we had PowerProtect Data Manager,” Chapman explains, “recovering a virtual machine was quite a long-winded process. We’d have to recover a volume snapshot, go through it to find the VM we wanted, and then either restore the whole VM or open it in a protected network, copy the data off it, and copy it back to the VM when it was up and running.

“With PowerProtectData Manager, we can now open vCenter, identify the VM we want to recover, right-click and recover a VM directly from there. We can either choose file-level restore or recover a whole VM in seconds, whereas previously it could take us 10-15 minutes to get everything up and running. It’s a simpler process and it’s a lot faster.

“We’ve created some rules that utilize VMware tagging. To add a machine to a protection rule, you simply right-click and add a tag, and the machine will get protected according to that policy automatically. Managing the protection policies is simple. I set them up straightaway and I’ve been using the original ones ever since.”

On Point with a Single Interface

“We’re a small team,” says Chapman. “I use the software along with a couple of my colleagues. We run the whole infrastructure ourselves. On an average day, it can be anything from problems

with virtual machines to recovering virtual machines, to recovering databases, to creating new networks or servers for our customers. We do all of that.

“We set up the PowerProtect DDVEs when we installed the system. I don’t need to touch them really, they just run happily in the background. I get an email every day telling me how much storage is available. If we need to expand them, we can just add a volume to them, because they’re virtual, and then go into the filesystem and expand the filesystem. Basically, it’s very simple to manage.

“And, Data Protection Suite is simple. Basically, I taught myself. I evaluated the software, I installed the software, and it worked. We evaluated several products, and Data Protection Suite had everything – from a backup solution to replication, everything that we needed was there in one package.

“Most of my wish list came true with the PowerProtect Data Manager plugin for vSphere, which provides perfect integration with vCenter. I no longer need to login to Data Manager. I can fully manage our DDVEs through vCenter. It just really works. We use VMware every day of the week, so it just saves having to go to another point to manage something. It’s made our lives much easier.”



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Meeting Deadlines

Chapman notes that RecoverPoint for VMs also fully integrates with HTML5 vCenter: “Again, it’s something we can manage in one place.” RecoverPoint for VMs helps PCS give their customers peace of mind. “If there’s a newspaper deadline, if we need to bring a machine back to life, we have to do it straightaway,” says Chapman. “In the newspaper industry, you can’t have 10 minutes downtime.

“And with RecoverPoint for VMs, we also can bring a machine back temporarily for testing our development builds against. We make a lot of use of that. We’ll bring a clone of a machine to live, install our upgrades on it, test it fully away from live production, and if we have to, then we can make those changes live. RecoverPoint for VMs has made administration a lot easier and managing it through vCenter is a huge benefit.”

Saving Space and Carrying On

Another benefit Chapman touts is the savings in backup storage space PCS gets from his Dell solution. He notes, “We’re running two DDVEs. We’re stacking up 60 terabytes of virtual servers and data that somehow is only consuming 25.7 terabytes of space on disk. We’re seeing deduplication rates between 94.6% and 96%.”

Of PCS’s Dell EMC data protection solution, Chapman says, “The top benefits for us are first, the simplicity of the products, and again, the fact that we can manage all through one interface. Also, the speed with which we can recover a machine, which is vital to our business and our customers. The overarching value of Dell EMC data protection for PCS is that this solution has been set up, it works, and it just carries on working.”