

Ensuring the safety of The Salvation Army's data with a robust Disaster Recovery solution



Kavanagh designed and implemented a resilient data storage solution for The Salvation Army to protect against the loss of critical, sensitive information in the event of disaster.

Since its foundation in 1865, The Salvation Army has grown to become a world-renowned Christian church and charity, with its own highly distinctive governance and practice. It operates in 115 countries internationally and, in the UK alone, The Salvation Army has more than 5,000 staff organised in 18 divisions.

After the Government, The Salvation Army is one of the largest and most diverse providers of social services in the UK and the Republic of Ireland. Its activities in the UK encompass a huge range of programmes including social service centres for the homeless, specialist centres for people battling with addiction, care homes for older people, churches and community centres. At a community level The Salvation Army provides many activities from education and parenting, to employment services, prison chaplaincy, and a Family Tracing Service handling around 4,000 cases a year.

THE CHALLENGE

From the hub of its operations for the UK and the Republic of Ireland at the Elephant and Castle in London, The Salvation Army's centralised IT facilities provides support for 3,500 IT users, including project workers, administrators and officers of The Salvation Army.

The Salvation Army relies heavily on technology to deliver a wide variety of services to its large user base. As a result of the large number of people involved, enormous volumes of data are generated. This information is not only crucial to daily operations, but also much of it is sensitive personal information, which must be kept secure.

"We have complete confidence in the ability of the resilient solution to meet our day-to-day needs and protect our vital information from major incidents. Kavanagh has delivered a solution within our budgetary constraints without compromising functionality or performance."

MARTYN CROFT,
HEAD OF CORPORATE SYSTEMS (UK),
THE SALVATION ARMY



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With the need for resilience, flexibility and resource optimisation in mind, Martyn Croft, Head of Corporate Systems for The Salvation Army in the UK and the Republic of Ireland, had followed a strategy of server and storage virtualisation based on VMware software, but the storage platform could not ensure the availability of the data.

"Our infrastructure lacked protection from loss of data if our data centre experienced a major disaster, such as a fire," comments Martyn. "Therefore we needed a solution providing data replication using a back up data storage facility located in a separate building."

The Salvation Army's Technical Specialist, Neil Edmonds, undertook a review of the options for suitable Storage products on which to base their DR solution. It needed to integrate easily with the existing HP server infrastructure, and also be fully compatible with the version of VMware software in operation. Most importantly for a high profile charitable organisation, the solution had to meet a tight budget and deliver excellent value for money.

FINDING THE SOLUTION

The research into the available SAN technologies revealed that, while there was no shortage of enterprise products on the market, the choice of cost-effective solutions was more limited. The search for a centralised storage system that would provide the functionality and performance needed, and meet the budgetary constraints, soon led The Salvation Army to HP's StorageWorks Enterprise Virtual Array (EVA).

The challenge, however, did not end with finding a suitable device. SAN systems are powerful but complex, which means that considerable expertise is needed to ensure that the storage solution is correctly specified, designed and subsequently installed and configured. The Salvation Army needed to find a highly qualified IT partner for the venture and approached HP for assistance.

With help from HP, The Salvation Army proceeded to evaluate proposals from a short list of three candidates. "With IT service providers, we found there was a tendency to assume that a large budget was available and push expensive products," observes Martyn. "In contrast, Kavanagh was prepared to work with us to design the right solution, at the right price. We were impressed with the technical expertise demonstrated by its pre-sales people in virtualisation and storage systems."

"We were delighted with the ease of use and reliability provided by the HP EVA, from the beginning, it just worked."

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Army's data with a robust



THE SOLUTION

The Salvation Army selected Kavanagh for the project as a result of its performance during the sales process and also because of its track record. Technical consultants from Kavanagh worked closely with The Salvation Army IT staff to specify a solution consisting of two HP EVAs. One EVA was located at the primary data centre to provide storage for the main production servers. The other was situated at a DR site in another building some distance away and updated continuously from the main system.

An important business consideration for the installation of the new storage environment was that any disruption to The Salvation Army's operations had to be avoided. The Salvation Army recognised the importance of Kavanagh's project management in controlling the deployment of such a solution.

At the outset of the engagement Kavanagh undertook a comprehensive design exercise to define the solution at a detailed level. "The details of the EVA configuration have major implications for functionality, performance and cost of the system," says Martyn. "Kavanagh's considerable experience in implementing these complex storage solutions was invaluable in helping us define our requirements."

Kavanagh took responsibility for the implementation, carrying out installation, connection, set up and testing of the EVA systems. The installation proceeded smoothly without impacting the organisation's ability to function.

With the infrastructure in place and working, The Salvation Army's team was able to start the process of migrating services to make use of the new storage systems. "We were delighted with the ease of use and reliability provided by the HP EVA," says Martyn. "From the beginning, it just worked."

RESULTS

The main driver for the project was to provide business continuity and data security in the event of disaster and with the continuous replication of data to the separately located DR system, this key objective has been achieved. Furthermore the centralised storage provided by the HP EVA has delivered a number of other benefits. Being able to respond to rapidly growing demands for information storage is another key requirement for the organisation.

The comprehensive storage management software provided by HP greatly simplifies administration and support functions. If an application needs more storage, a virtual drive can be added quickly and without risk.

Adding incremental physical storage to an HP EVA is simple, cost effective and the device has enormous capacity for expansion.

High quality support is also vital for such key systems and is provided by HP's proactive remote monitoring service. "We found the responsiveness of the service to be most impressive," Martyn reports. "When we removed a network cable during the testing and commissioning phase, we received an immediate call from HP." The Salvation Army's post project support will be augmented with Kavanagh proactive support services for SAN maintenance. This will mean that the SAN configuration will continue to conform to best practice as the environment grows and new technologies are incorporated in the future.

"The most valuable aspect of our new storage infrastructure is its utter dependability," says Martyn. "We know that it will just work, with no errors, and the automatic replication to the DR facility means that our critical information is completely safe."

Customer at a glance

- ◆ The Salvation Army in the UK and the Republic of Ireland
- ◆ Prominent Christian church and charity
- ◆ A leading provider of social services nationwide
- ◆ www.salvationarmy.org.uk

Challenge

- ◆ Build a resilient, scalable data storage system
- ◆ Ensure business continuity and data security in the event of disaster
- ◆ Implement the new infrastructure without disruption to operations
- ◆ Meet tight budgetary constraints without compromising the solution

Why Kavanagh?

- ◆ Demonstrated understanding of requirements
- ◆ Proven technical capability
- ◆ Excellent project management skills
- ◆ Design, planning and implementation skills
- ◆ Complete customer focus
- ◆ Expert in HP solutions
- ◆ Competitive pricing

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Solution

- ◆ New storage infrastructure based on HP EVAs
- ◆ Full DR capability using two separate data centres
- ◆ HP system management tools for ease of administration
- ◆ HP remote monitoring service

Results

- ◆ 100% DR coverage for critical data
- ◆ Improved reliability and resilience
- ◆ Reduced system management overhead
- ◆ Improved scalability for growth

Kavanagh Services

- ◆ Architecture and Design
- ◆ Project Management
- ◆ Proactive Support Services
- ◆ Account Management
- ◆ Implementation Consultancy

Technology highlights

Hardware

- ◆ Two HP EVAs

Software

- ◆ HP Command View EVA

For further information on how working with Kavanagh can benefit you, please call 01344 409800 or visit www.kavanagh.co.uk

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