

Phoenix Aviation Managers Take Flight with a Disaster Recovery Solution from InMage Systems and BMC Solutions

The Challenge: Disaster Recovery on the Radar

Phoenix Aviation Managers is a wholly owned subsidiary of Old Republic International Corporation, one of the nation's 50 largest publicly held insurance enterprises, with assets exceeding \$12 billion and capitalization of more than \$4 billion. Since 1983, the company has served the general aviation community with a wide range of insurance products, providing coverage for airports and aircraft ranging from small to medium-sized private planes to corporate jets.

Phoenix's main data center is located in Kennesaw, Georgia. The company's mission-critical applications include SQL, Exchange, imaging and insurance. Additionally, Phoenix has a partially virtualized IT environment based on VMware that houses file and print servers, domain controllers, and the main file server that functions as the primary storage repository. A disaster recovery site is located in Suwanee, Georgia, and houses another set of VMware machines and a storage area network (SAN).

"We were planning a disaster recovery (DR) implementation for our Kennesaw location and required technology that would replicate the data on our production servers in real time to the DR site in Suwanee," said Chris Morris, assistant vice president of IT for Phoenix Aviation Managers. "Hurricane Katrina was definitely a driving factor in our decision to expand our DR capabilities. We had an office in New Orleans that went down, and recovery was very challenging. Data wasn't being replicated in Kennesaw at the time, so it took us a while to get everything back up and running."

"We are also a subsidiary of a publicly traded company, so we are subject to the Sarbanes-Oxley (SOX) Act," Morris continued. "SOX requires public companies to have a DR plan in place for recovering business operations, so that was another influential factor. We needed a solution that would enable us to achieve recovery time and recovery point objectives from a DR perspective, but also in terms of recovering deleted files or folders for employees on a daily basis."

Phoenix Aviation turned to its longtime technology partner, BMC Solutions (now eBryIT), to find and implement the right disaster recovery solution for its needs. eBryIT is an enterprise IT service and support company that has helped businesses design, procure, integrate and administer IT infrastructures for more than 22 years. eBryIT offers comprehensive programs for business continuity, DR, network security, high availability and managed services. The company partners with leading vendors to make the best technology available to its clients.

“Phoenix Aviation Managers has been one of our most valued customers since 1999,” said Sandy Flynn, vice president of marketing for eBryIT. “We’ve assisted them with everything from mainframe and virtualization to storage and backup technologies. For this particular project, we were tasked with finding an easy-to-use continuous data protection (CDP) and DR solution.”

“We’ve worked with BMC (eBryIT) for many years on numerous projects, and they have always helped us align technology with our business goals,” said Morris. “So for this DR project, we turned to them again for recommendations.”

The Solution: First-Class Disaster Recovery with InMage’s DR-Scout

After reviewing Phoenix Aviation’s technology requirements, eBryIT recommended InMage, a disaster recovery and business continuity software provider. InMage’s flagship product, DR-Scout, is a software solution based on CDP technology. DR-Scout addresses DR, continuous local backup and application availability for both physical and virtualized IT environments.

“This project really centered on Phoenix Aviation’s need for continuous data protection,” said Flynn. “We believe InMage had the best offering in the industry with its DR-Scout product. DR-Scout was also perfectly matched with a storage area network from Pillar Data that is part of the Phoenix infrastructure. And we share the same philosophies—eBryIT and InMage put the customer’s needs first to find the very best solutions we can for them. This yields long-term relationships that last beyond just a single implementation.”

eBryIT implemented InMage’s DR-Scout software to replicate data from Phoenix’s Tier 1 applications, including Exchange, SQL and SharePoint, along with imaging and accounting applications.

“DR-Scout has provided our business with measurable benefits and excels in performing all the functions we expected it to,” said Morris. “The number one benefit of DR-Scout has been the ease and ability of failover to our DR site, either in the case of a disaster or other failure, or simply to test for compliance. We also gained the ability to recover files and folders in real time, down to the second. That maximizes business productivity and minimizes downtime. Higher availability is another benefit. When we need to bring down production servers for maintenance, we use DR-Scout to failover to the local backup servers and continue operations uninterrupted.”

“As far as time savings, we were previously backing up to disk, then to tape,” continued Morris. “We’re not dependent on tape anymore. It saves me about 25% of

my time in the morning now that we have InMage. In the past, I personally had to back up our data to tape, verify it and grab the tape drive to have it shipped to secure storage. With DR-Scout's real-time replication, I've eliminated that entire process. InMage also saves us time on the recovery side. With tape backup, we had to call the secure site, have the tapes delivered, and load them up to find the data – a cumbersome process. We'd rather use InMage and simply go back to the DR site to retrieve files or folders. It's more reliable and only takes minutes. As far as IT costs, I also don't have to hire a dedicated person to do backup and recovery."

The Results: Phoenix Aviation Gains Considerable Latitude in Data Protection

The benefits of the DR-Scout implementation for Phoenix Aviation Managers included:

- Business continuity - ease and ability of failover to its DR site during disasters or other events that disrupts normal business operations
- Shortened recovery times – recovering deleted files or folders now takes seconds or minutes, versus hours or days
- 25% daily reduction in time spent by IT staff managing tape backup
- Reduced administrative requirements – no need to hire a dedicated IT person for backup and recovery
- Comprehensive protection across Tier 1 applications (Exchange, SQL and SharePoint), as well as imaging and insurance applications
- A highly reliable backup solution based on real-time data replication, ensuring protection of the most recent copies of data
- Increase in business productivity as a result of higher data and application availability and minimized downtime

As disaster recovery continues to gain momentum as a top priority for businesses worldwide, eBryIT expects to see increased demand for products like DR-Scout.

"Implementations like this are so important to the safety and longevity of the customer's core business," said Flynn. "A great relationship between everyone involved is critical to ensuring project success. The eBryIT and InMage teams worked very synergistically with Phoenix Aviation to provide an excellent end result. We are

very pleased with our partnership with InMage and their dedication to providing the high levels of service and support to our customer that we pride ourselves on."

"We are highly satisfied with the experience we've had with BMC (eBryIT) and InMage," concluded Morris. "When we e-mail InMage customer support, multiple people respond within a few minutes and follow up until everything is resolved. It's great to know that not just one person is there, but multiple people. We're so pleased with DR-Scout's performance that we're planning to expand its implementation to our Dallas, Seattle and New Orleans offices by 2010 or 2011. And BMC has always had timely, quality service. They look out for their customers, never trying to push products but really doing due diligence to find out what fits a particular situation and IT budget. They are and will remain one of our most trusted partners."