Quantum®

CASE STUDY

DX*i* & Scalar Series

Software-as-a-Service Company Relies on Disk-Tape Tiered Storage Solution to Help Manage Growth

TreeHouse Interactive made all the right moves to support high growth and even higher ambitions: distributed IT architecture, redundant systems, offsite disaster recovery and more. But slow backups dragged the company down, until it standardized on Quantum DXi-Scalar tiered storage for fast and utterly reliable data protection.

THE BURDEN OF SLOW BACKUP

TreeHouse Interactive is a well-established, growing provider of cutting-edge partner relationship management (PRM) and marketing automation platform (MAP) solutions. The company's applications are delivered through a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) model, meaning that IT reliability and customer data protection are paramount; if systems go down or customer data is lost, the company is dead in the water. So it's not hard to imagine how slow and failure-prone backups quickly became a significant problem for the company.

TreeHouse adheres to a strict rotating backup schedule at its two data centers in Las Vegas and Salt Lake City, backing up databases incrementally during the week and fully on weekends, and sending tapes offsite for disaster recovery. While some of this data includes internal employee files, the majority is customer CRM data from SQL databases, making it extremely valuable. Unfortunately, even though the company was using disk arrays in hopes of fast storage, the IT team was increasingly unable to complete routine backups.

"Our backup times were incredibly slow, often taking hours and hours to complete," says Kory Willis, Director of IT at TreeHouse Interactive. "We didn't have enough time in a day to run a full backup, and even when we'd stagger backups it would degrade overall performance. We'd routinely get errors based on unavailable drives, and the backup was often still running when employees came in every morning."

In addition, Willis was concerned about the time it might take the company to do a full data restore if it were ever required.

"I can't afford 12-24 hours to restore critical systems, and based on how long our backups were taking, that was a real fear," explains Willis.

He found himself spending upwards of 40 percent of his time every week managing backups and tweaking the system in search of more speed. As part of this continuous adjustment, the company repurposed an old Quantum SuperLoader® tape system to help with the backup duties and was pleased to discover that, although it was over ten years old, it was totally reliable and 3-4 times faster than the disk array. That got the TreeHouse IT team thinking....

ROCK-SOLID RELIABILITY, YEAR AFTER YEAR

TreeHouse was already working with Quantum on its partner and reseller channel program, so the IT team was familiar with the company's leadership position in data storage. As the team researched Quantum's disk-based DXi® appliances and Scalar® tape libraries, it quickly became apparent that a Quantum tiered storage solution might be the answer to TreeHouse's data protection woes.

"Our decision to use Quantum turned out to be an easy one because the old SuperLoader worked so well—in fact, we still use it today," says Willis. "We knew that if we could get that reliability and performance out of decade-old equipment, Quantum would continue to treat us right."

"We couldn't be more pleased. The DXi appliance is insanely fast, and the Scalar i40s just scream. An added selling point has been the scalability—we don't have to find more equipment or change infrastructure; the Quantum solution can just grow with us."

Kory Willis
Director of IT, TreeHouse Interactive

SOLUTION OVERVIEW

- Quantum DXi6700 deduplication appliance
- Quantum Scalar i40 tape library
- Symantec Backup Exec

KEY BENEFITS

- Cuts backup times in half
- Reduces backup administration by more than 75%
- Enables efficient tiered storage strategy
- Scales easily to accommodate data growth

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The team settled on an 8TB Quantum DXi6700 deduplication appliance for its production data center in Salt Lake City and two Scalar i40 tape libraries, one in the production data center and a second one in the company's Las Vegas development center. Installation and set-up went smoothly, and the new systems were quickly in operation.

"Quantum technicians got on the line with us as part of the deployment, and it was really nice to have their help with the initial configuration rather than just leaving us to fumble around," recalls Willis. "It made the whole process straightforward and easy."

FAST, SCALABLE DATA PROTECTION FROM QUANTUM

The DXi and Scalar solutions have solved TreeHouse's data protection problems, allowing the company to do more backups, more often—and keep data longer.

"We couldn't be more pleased," Willis reports. "The DXi appliance is insanely fast, and the Scalar i40s just scream. And an added selling point has been the scalability —we don't have to find more equipment or change infrastructure; the Quantum solution can just grow with us."

Willis also likes the powerful deduplication capability of the DXi system.

"Our DXi stores so much data we really didn't focus on the deduplication, but it's given the system even more capacity and I'm looking forward to how much bandwidth it will save when we eventually deploy a second appliance for replication," he says.

With the DXi, backup times have been cut in half. TreeHouse is now easily able to complete its incremental backups at the end of each day, as well as full backups every weekend. Those full backups are then transferred to tape on the Scalar i40 for long-term storage, with the tapes routinely moved offsite for disaster protection. And that ability to hang onto data for the long haul has already come in handy.

"We had one issue with corrupt DNS records, and we had to keep going further and further back in time—months—to find a clean file," says Willis. "We were really thankful we'd been able to keep piling up data on the DXi and Scalar i40."

TreeHouse has also found that the Quantum solutions have lived up to expectations in terms of reliability.

"We only had one problem with a stuck tape in a drive, and Quantum was quickly on the phone, overnighted us replacement hardware, and everything was soon back in operation," Willis recounts. "It was a great experience from a support standpoint."

Perhaps most importantly, the Quantum tiered storage solution has given back a precious commodity to the team: time. Backup administration time has been reduced more than 75%.

"From an ROI standpoint, the Quantum solution really paid for itself," says Willis. "Now, other than the occasional test restore, I just come in every morning, make sure my Symantec Backup Exec dashboard is showing nice green checkmarks, and I know everything ran okay. I never have to do anything with the Quantum systems; they just keep on running."

"I've been really impressed with the Quantum organization and products. The whole experience has been so stellar I just can't recommend the company highly enough."

PRODUCTION ENVIRONMENT IN SLC DATA CENTER

Windows, SQL Server(s)
Web Files, CRM Data

BUE 2012

DXi6700

Scalar i40

DEV ENVIRONMENT IN LAS VEGAS

Dev Environment

BUE 2012

Scalar i40

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ABOUT TREEHOUSE INTERACTIVE

TreeHouse Interactive delivers leading SaaS-based partner relationship management (PRM) and marketing automation platform (MAP) solutions to companies that want to get better return on investment from their partner networks and marketing efforts. Reseller View is the most complete PRM in the industry while Marketing View has been innovating marketing automation since 1998.
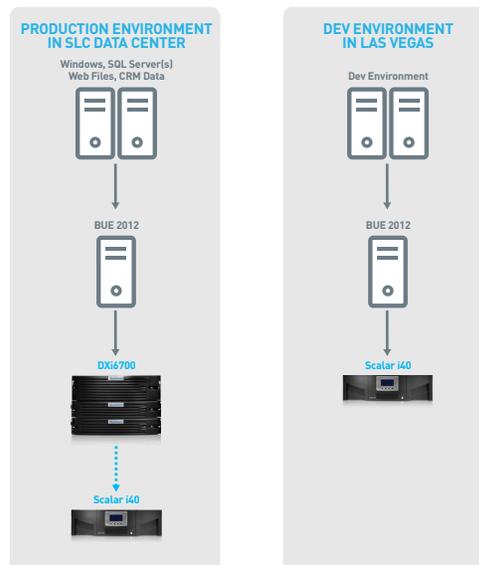
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