

CCMA

Even short periods of downtime can have massive repercussions on CCMA's operations. The commission wanted to ensure that it could rapidly and fully restore critical business services in the event of downtime. PlateSpin Forge® from NetIQ provides comprehensive protection for CCMA's approximately 20 servers, at lower cost and complexity than comparable solutions. CCMA can now recover its systems in less than an hour, considerably minimising disruption to the business.



Overview

The Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) of South Africa is an independent dispute-resolution body that helps to settle workplace-related disputes objectively and to promote fair practices in the work environment. Headquartered in Johannesburg, the commission operates 18 offices in eight regions.

Challenge

As the sole entity responsible for mediating employment disputes in South Africa, CCMA handles huge volumes of workplace-related grievances and appeals.

"We typically receive a total of between 2,500 and 3,000 new case requests every day," said Refilwe Molete, information and communication technology (ICT) systems engineer at CCMA. "This puts huge pressure on us to ensure that systems are kept up and running

round the clock, so that our lawyers and other staff can access the applications they need to manage all these cases.

"We had experienced some problems with servers failing in the past and wanted to make sure that we could bring systems back online much faster in the event of an outage."

Solution

CCMA set out to find a comprehensive disaster recovery solution that could deliver fast, effective system recovery and quickly honed in on PlateSpin Forge—an all-in-one hardware appliance that provides out-of-the-box protection for physical and virtual server workloads.

"PlateSpin Forge stood out for us because it was very cost-effective and easy-to-manage: once you put a workload on the box, replication starts just like that," said Molete. "Installation was also very simple, so we were able to get the new disaster recovery environment up and running within a day."

By joining forces with NetIQ® partner Afro-centric IP during the selection and installation process, CCMA was able to ensure a smooth transition to the new disaster recovery solution.

Currently, PlateSpin Forge protects approximately 20 server workloads for CCMA, including case management applications and financial and human resources systems, all backed up daily.



At a Glance

■ Industry

Professional Business Services

■ Location

South Africa

■ Challenge

Because of reliance on critical IT systems, the commission needed an effective disaster recovery solution.

■ Solution

Use PlateSpin Forge to rapidly fail over to a virtualized recovery environment.

■ Results

- + Gained ability to recover business-critical services faster and with less administrative effort
- + Gained a virtualized disaster recovery environment
- + Gained the ability to seamlessly transfer to the virtualized disaster recovery environment

"We couldn't ask for an easier or more effective disaster recovery solution: PlateSpin Forge runs tremendously well!"

REFILWE MOLETE

Information and Communication Technology
Systems Engineer
CCMA

“When our terminal server crashed and we had to fail over to PlateSpin, it took less than an hour to get the systems back up...none of our users even noticed the difference.”

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CCMA has established a dual-site configuration for its disaster recovery environment, with the PlateSpin appliance housed at a secondary data centre, operated by the commission's hosting provider MTN South Africa.

The ability to rapidly fail over to a virtualized recovery environment contained within the PlateSpin Forge appliance minimises the direct impact of a system failure on users. It also eliminates the need to revert to paper-based working during the outage and the subsequent requirement to labouriously key data back into the recovered system.

With PlateSpin Forge, CCMA can easily test its disaster recovery plan at regular intervals to ensure that workloads remain fully protected at all times. Using the solution's web-based management interface, the IT team can quickly switch on a server's virtual disaster recovery environment to check that the physical workload is fully replicated on PlateSpin.

The PlateSpin® solution also makes it easy for CCMA to run full disaster recovery simulations twice annually. During these simulations, CCMA moves users over to work on the virtual environments running on PlateSpin Forge.

Results

CCMA can now recover business-critical services faster and with less administrative effort, thanks to PlateSpin Forge. When the hard drives on one of the commission's terminal servers failed recently, the IT team simply failed the workload over to the virtualized disaster recovery environment on the PlateSpin Forge appliance.

“If a server went down in the past, it would take us a day or more to recover our systems—assuming that we had replacement hardware ready to deploy,” said Molete. “When our terminal server crashed and we had to fail over to PlateSpin, it took less than an hour to get the systems back up and the best part was that none of our users even noticed the difference.”

The PlateSpin solution proved its value again one month later, when the vendor returned the repaired server to CCMA. PlateSpin Forge enabled the seamless transfer of the virtualized disaster recovery environment back to the original hardware, again with no disruption to users.

“We couldn't ask for an easier or more effective disaster recovery solution: PlateSpin Forge runs tremendously well,” said Molete.



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