

ATOS ORIGIN AND SUNGARD – PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION

An Atos Origin case study

When Atos Origin started working with SunGard Availability Services in March 2006, its brief was simple: reduce recovery time objectives (RTO) from several days to just hours. However, its technical brief was complex: it required images taken on one hardware platform to be restored to another with 100% effectiveness. As an international service company with a strong blue chip customer base, it needed to ensure that in the event of an outage, it could maintain Information Availability at all costs. With SunGard's unrivalled testing facilities and consultancy expertise, Atos found the ideal partner to create a truly bespoke solution to a challenging problem.

Atos Origin 'At a Glance':

- A leading international IT services company and official IT partner to the Olympic Games
- UK revenues of over €1 billion
- 7,000 UK employees
- www.atosorigin.co.uk

Atos Origin

Atos Origin is Europe's leading IT consultancy and systems integrator. With 47,000 employees around the globe and revenues of over £2.6 billion, it has delivered systems for some of the world's highest profile initiatives, including the Olympic Games, for which it has been the official IT partner since 1992.

In the UK, Atos Origin has more than 7,000 staff and revenues of over £530 million, and has customers as diverse as ABN Amro, Vodafone, National Express, Lloyds TSB and the Department of Work and Pensions. It processes and distributes one in ten pay slips in the UK - that's 25 million pay slips every year - and ensures that 10 million benefits claimants receive their payments on time. More than 50% of all the packaged sandwiches sold in the UK are produced by companies running Atos Origin implemented systems. Given the wide variety and sensitivity of its work, the organisation depends on achieving the highest levels of Information Availability.

The Challenge

When Nick Bhogal Technical Consultant took over the management of Atos Origin's UK Medical Services Business Unit's Business Continuity (BC) strategy in 2003 he began the process of improving recovery times for customers. With its then BC provider, it had

developed a sophisticated process for recovering the systems it managed for customers, which allowed it to successfully recover data following outages or other incidents. For all its sophistication – the process enabled images taken on one platform (e.g. Windows/Intel) to be restored to a different platform such as IBM with little impact on performance – the approach was time-consuming and slow, with full restores taking several days to complete. Keen to bring the organisation’s Recovery Time Objective (RTO) to just a few hours, Bhogal and his team reviewed their roster of Information Availability partners, placing a strong emphasis on cross-platform expertise and technical competence.

“We were very mindful that any impact on our systems would not just affect our customers, but their customers as well. So bringing our RTO as low as possible was critical,” Bhogal explains. “Given the sheer diversity of the platforms we support and the services we provide, we needed a partner that had not only the experience we needed, but the facilities to test and re-test our complex processes. SunGard had no problem in ticking both boxes.”

The Solution

With over 100,000 disaster recovery tests completed in its nearly 30-year history, SunGard offered unrivalled expertise in every element of the Information Availability equation. Its nationwide Tier-IV data centres and dedicated network infrastructure – the SunGard National Network, ScaleNet and the SunGard Global Network – serve a single purpose: helping organisations ensure their customers, employees and other stakeholders have access to the information they need, 24/7.

“The SunGard testing facilities were like a playground, allowing us to experiment with a number of techniques and technologies to find what worked best. Its consultants’ expertise is second-to-none, and its teams worked with us to develop a truly innovative solution.” comments Bhogal.

SunGard and Atos developed a method for recovering servers tailored to Atos Origin’s specific requirements and IT infrastructure. Rather than using conventional tape-based backups restoring to pre-built servers, the SunGard / Atos Origin methodology relied on ‘Hot Images’, which are updated at various times during the day and allow for ‘point in time’ restores. This approach ensures minimal loss of data and removes the need for pre-built servers and the subsequent requirement for tape devices, libraries, etc. Their approach method also enabled the recovery of Windows/Intel server images to dissimilar hardware. Before going live, the process was tested rigorously at SunGard’s flagship London Technology Centre, and was able to restore hot images taken on one platform safely to completely different hardware in a matter of hours, with 100% effectiveness.

Business Benefits: Recovery Time Reduced from Days to Hours

Under Atos Origin’s previous arrangements it could take up to three days to fully restore servers from scratch. With SunGard’s experience and facilities, the entire process has been shortened to just 12 hours. This considerable improvement in Information Availability has

led to manifold benefits: not only can Atos Origin offer existing customers improved quality of service, it can also attract new business.

“Previously, restoring servers over three days used up a large amount of man hours, with some of our development team having to be redeployed to manage the recovery. Thanks to SunGard, we’ve been able to dramatically reduce the demands on our own staff, whilst shortening our RTO and increasing Information Availability. As a result, we’ve freed up valuable man hours and can enable our team to focus on their primary job: developing and pushing forward our business,” Bhogal concludes.

About SunGard Availability Services

SunGard Availability Services is the pioneer and leading provider of Information Availability services, helping to ensure that nearly 10,000 customers in North America and Europe have access to their business-critical information systems. With over 3.5 million square feet. of operations space, SunGard offers a complete range of Information Availability services for more than 30 technology platforms, from 48 hour disaster recovery hot sites to always-on, high-availability infrastructure, co-location and electronic vaulting services. SunGard also provides technology and systems management services for application and data centre outsourcing, as well as business continuity consulting services and planning software. www.sungard.co.uk.

*In May 2006, SunGard Availability Services (UK) Limited was recognised at the Business Continuity Awards as Service Provider of the Year, an accolade that has been awarded to SunGard five times in the awards’ eight-year history. At the awards, SunGard was also recognised as having the Most Innovative Product of the Year and Consultant of the Year, as well as supporting the Most Effective Recovery of the Year.

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