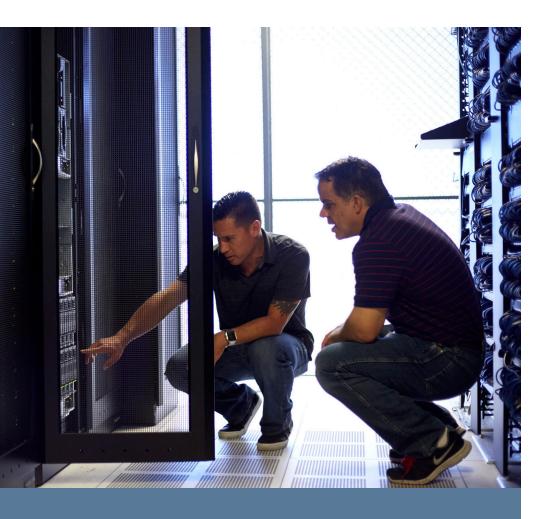# Ferry service protects its website and ticketing system

Cross Sound Ferry ensures business continuity with data replication and quick recovery using Quest AppAssure and DL4000 backup and recovery appliances.

"The Quest solution gives us peace of mind knowing that we can recover from a hardware failure in minutes rather than days."

John Simmons
Manager of Information Technology
Cross Sound Ferry

CUSTOMER PROFILE

Company	Cross Sound Ferry
Industry	Transportation
Country	United States
Employees	400-600 (seasonal)
Website	**www.longislandferry.com**

BUSINESS NEED

To ensure business continuity, Cross Sound Ferry needed to replace its tape-based backup and recovery solution. They needed reliable, automated backups that would not impact production systems, as well as fast recovery that was not limited to day-old data.

SOLUTION

Cross Sound Ferry chose the integrated solution of Quest AppAssure and DL4000 backup and recovery appliances, which provides reliable, automated replication to an off-site virtual standby and recovery of even recent changes to data in minutes.

BENEFITS

- Provides reliable, automated replication to an off-site virtual standby for business continuity
- Ensures quick restores — file restores in 5–10 minutes, database restores in 15 minutes, and a full VM restore in just 40 minutes
- Enables recovery of recent changes to files, rather than only to the previous day's version
- Saves IT staff 2–3 hours of work each week managing tapes
- Enables recovery from hardware failures in minutes rather than days

SOLUTIONS FEATURED

- Backup and Recovery

For a ferry service, data protection is literally a moving target. Cross Sound Ferry enables over one million passengers and road vehicles to travel conveniently between Long Island, New York and New England. To deliver this service, the two-person IT team must support and protect not only the company's basic infrastructure (such as Active Directory and Exchange), website, and reservation & ticketing systems, but also point-of-sale (POS) machines for the amenities on the eight boats themselves, such as full-service bars and delis.

> "The Quest solution saves me 2–3 hours each week that I used to spend just managing backup tapes, and we don't have to worry about an unreliable, manual process."
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> *Manager of Information Technology*
> *Cross Sound Ferry*

TAPE-BASED BACKUPS FAIL TO SECURE BUSINESS-CRITICAL SYSTEMS

Keeping these systems available is critical to the business. "Our ticketing system and our web site are our lifeblood — if they are down for longer than an hour, there is a significant and immediate impact on revenue," explains John Simmons, manager of information technology for Cross Sound Ferry. "For example, if a key system or database were to go down, we would not be able to take credit card payments from customers at the ferries, so we could potentially be turning down customers. Beyond those customer-facing systems, we also have to ensure that email and other business systems are available for employees to do their jobs."

However, Cross Sound Ferry's current tape-based backup solution, Symantec Backup Exec, wasn't satisfying these needs. "Backup Exec required nightly backup windows, and often the backup job would fail to complete within the window," says Simmons. "Since it was on a server that was needed for production functions, I would have to stop the backup, so we weren't adequately protected."

Cross Sound Ferry's problems with tape backups did not stop there. The tapes also lacked the capacity to fully back up a server, so multiple tapes were often required for even an incremental backup. And ensuring that tapes were changed on time and properly stored offsite was a time-consuming, manual process that introduced risk for the company.

NIGHTLY BACKUPS DON'T ALLOW RESTORES OF FILES CHANGED DURING THE BUSINESS DAY

Restores were equally challenging. With only nightly backups, changes made during the workday could not be recovered, hurting the business. "We had frequent complaints — primarily from the employees who modify server files constantly, such as accounting and marketing staff — because we could not restore important spreadsheets or other files that they had worked hard on during the day," notes Simmons.

Cross Sound Ferry was also concerned about their inability to perform bare-metal restores (BMRs) of older servers, which were more prone to failure. "The old tape backup system could not do a bare-metal restore," adds Simmons. "When a key server failed during the day, we had to focus on getting the server back up as opposed to getting the applications back up. We needed the ability to restore any server within hours, not days."

PRODUCTS & SERVICES

HARDWARE

DL4000 Backup & Recovery Appliance

SOFTWARE

AppAssure

Quest

BACKUP, RECOVERY AND REPLICATION IN AN INTEGRATED, EASY-TO-USE SOLUTION

To address these issues, Simmons decided to virtualize seven of the company's physical servers and invest in a new backup and recovery solution. Simmons happened upon the AppAssure backup, recovery and replication solution in an industry magazine and was intrigued. After further research, he downloaded the software for a free trial and was immediately impressed with how easy it was to install and use.

"The product was easy to install on any hardware that I had and I could start backing up our data immediately," says Simmons. "Many backup tools have such a complicated interface that you can quickly get lost. But AppAssure is really easy to set up and use — within 10 or 15 minutes, I was able to start the initial backup. Then I did my first restore in my test environment, and it just worked — I knew it was exactly what we needed."

As part of its virtualization initiative, Cross Sound Ferry also needed new physical backup servers. Simmons learned how the DL4000 Backup and Recovery Appliance integrates with AppAssure to deliver complete data protection, and was sold on the complete solution. "I wanted a solution that would do everything I needed to do with just one interface and not multiple interfaces," explains Simmons. "Quest bundled AppAssure with the DL4000 appliance, enabling us to back up unlimited virtual and physical servers from a single, simple interface. That was like a home run for me — I was all over it."

EXPERT HELP FOR FAST DEPLOYMENT

With the help of a Quest engagement specialist, Cross Sound Ferry was able to deploy the solution in less than two hours. "The specialist helped me deploy both the core appliance and the replica," recalls Simmons. "Then he actually set up the backups with our various systems based

on our needs, such as the duration of our retention policy. We were done in a couple of hours."

AUTOMATED BACKUPS TO VIRTUAL STANDBY ELIMINATE HOURS OF TAPE MANAGEMENT EVERY WEEK

Cross Sound Ferry is now replicating all of its 4.67 terabytes of data from its primary datacenter to a virtual standby in a separate building. "We chose to back up our key servers every 15 minutes and servers that change less frequently every hour," explains Simmons. "Replication takes only a minute or two, depending on how frequent the snapshots are on a given server and how much data has changed, I get daily email notifications so I can easily monitor the status of the backup jobs. The Quest solution saves me 2–3 hours each week that I used to spend just managing backup tapes, and we don't have to worry about an unreliable, manual process."

FAST RECOVERY WITH MINIMAL DATA LOSS

Moreover, Cross Sound Ferry can recover data quickly — even files that were changed earlier in the same workday. "File restores now take only 5–10 minutes and the data is less than 15 minutes old, so IT is now able to save the day for marketing and accounting staff who accidentally delete a file they've been working on all day," reports Simmons. "Plus, since we are replicating Active Directory and Exchange, we are also protected against email outages, which is critical for business continuity."

In fact, the time to restore a whole database or even an entire VM is also measured in minutes. "Restoring a database took just 15 minutes — including the mount time as well as the time to copy the database and transaction log back to the appropriate database server," reports Simmons. "I've also restored one VM, which took only 40 minutes." The Quest solution even supports the bare-metal recovery that Cross Sound Ferry needed. "I haven't actually have to do a bare-metal

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> *Cross Sound Ferry*

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restore in production yet, but I tested it and it worked," Simmons says. "The Quest solution gives us peace of mind knowing that we can recover from a hardware failure in minutes rather than days."

DEDICATED, EXPERT SUPPORT

Although the DL4000 and AppAssure have been virtually trouble-free, Cross Sound Ferry knows that Quest Support is there when needed. "I did have one issue about two months after I installed the appliance — the GUI would lock up and I would have to shut down the AppAssure service in order to get it back up and running," explains Simmons. "The Quest Support team tracked it down to a Microsoft issue and got us back up and running."

ABOUT QUEST

Quest helps our customers reduce tedious administration tasks so they can focus on the innovation necessary for their businesses to grow. Quest® solutions are scalable, affordable and simple to use, and they deliver unmatched efficiency and productivity. Combined with Quest's invitation to the global community to be a part of its innovation, as well as our firm commitment to ensuring customer satisfaction, Quest will continue to accelerate the delivery of the most comprehensive solutions for Azure cloud management, SaaS, security, workforce mobility and data-driven insight.

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