Quest

The show must go on

Boston's leading theater chooses Quest AppAssure to support its great performances, making backups an almost "set it and forget it" activity

BUSINESS NEED

The award-winning Huntington Theatre needed backup software that was easier to use, less expensive and more reliable than its existing solution.

SOLUTION

Huntington Theatre chose the AppAssure backup, replication and recovery solution.

BENEFITS

- Delivered estimated per-year savings of 25-30 percent over old solution
- Made it easy to restore creative work, whether it's one file, a folder, or an entire drive
- Surmounted IT-related productivity losses across company
- Made a "night and day difference" in backup efficiency and speed
- Became the ccenterpiece of a new disaster recovery plan
- Delivered ccompression rates that leave plenty of room for data growth

SOLUTIONS AT A GLANCE

- Backup and recovery

"I've had backup situations where I've prayed that AppAssure picked it up because it was going to be bad news for me. And sure enough, it's there every time."

Scott Poole, IT Director, Huntington Theatre

The Huntington Theatre Company, one of Boston's great cultural assets, has delighted an audience of millions since it was founded, offering performances of both new plays and old masterpieces. Run as a non-profit, the Huntington is also training and supporting the next generation of theater artists. But when the current IT director, Scott Poole, first stepped onto the scene, he found an IT infrastructure that couldn't deliver a star performance.

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> *Huntington Theatre*

In fact, technology issues were adding stress to the lives of theater employees producing quality plays under tight deadlines. There were decade-old computers and servers running Windows 2000. The version of GroupWise email was out of date. "I spent a few days looking over their backup and recovery software and found it to be difficult to operate and even harder to restore data." The desktops were "locked down like medieval prison cells. And the users couldn't do anything."

Worst of all for Poole was when data went missing. "I remember dreading the times a user would ask me to recover a lost document or folder, knowing how difficult it was going to be to maneuver through the backup server. They'd have to contact the outsource company — it would take days." Sometimes, lost information was lost for good because, according to Poole, the retention rate was only about 4-5 days. "If you lost something previous to this, you were out of luck."

MAKING DOWNTIME UNTHINKABLE
But no matter what, the show had to go on.

"I came in right at the beginning of the new season in November. And, you know, it was 'do everything you can, make us great, but don't let us have any downtime.'"

Poole had to come up with a solution to make downtime — and losing vital information — unthinkable. For the Huntington's theater artists, that would have meant less time to focus on a bound-for-Broadway production, develop a new play or champion theater as an art form.

At first, Poole tried to salvage some of the existing technology but quickly decided it wasn't going to be possible. "I definitely wanted to have a real backup," says Poole. "So the obvious choice was to go with what I knew and what I like and what has proven to be very successful for me in the past. And that was AppAssure."

At stake was the need to manage risk. That's why having AppAssure in place was so important for Poole. "I need to make sure that if I'm not here, things still go on." With AppAssure, "even someone that wasn't as IT-centric could restore files — if need be — easily."

SAVING MONEY FOR A NON–PROFIT
Ticket income covers only half of the Huntington Theater's annual operating expenses. For the rest, it relies on donations to support its outstanding performances onstage and work in the community. AppAssure is now helping it save some of those donor contributions. The estimated savings per year are 25–30 percent over the old backup solution. The reason? AppAssure eliminates the need for costly tapes and dedicated servers and makes the most out of disk space. With AppAssure's compression rates, Poole is able to store 5–6TB of data

PRODUCTS & SERVICES

SERVICES

Quest AppAssure

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onto a 4TB NAS device with plenty of room left over for growth.

It has also helped theater staff make more productive use of their time. Before the installation of AppAssure, the box office manager was responsible for switching out hard drives for their backup solution. After living through a period marked by a loss of productivity due to IT issues, the Huntington's employees are benefiting from better technical support for their creative work.

"The difference now is night and day; it's more efficient," says Poole. "People are happy. They're saving time having to recreate documents, folders, files all over again from scratch because they couldn't get back the right one, if they could get anything back."

IF THE PLACE BURNS DOWN

The AppAssure deployment proved to be a positive experience, according to Poole. "I've had backup situations where I've prayed that AppAssure picked it up because it was going to be bad news for me. And sure enough, it's there every time."

With AppAssure in place, Poole can now turn his attention from worrying about backup and recovery to focusing on creating a comprehensive disaster recovery (DR) process. The plan is centered on AppAssure's ability to replicate in real time across networks. For example, Poole is replicating backup data across a private fiber line to the Huntington's second office in Boston. He describes it as "the big star piece to my DR plan."

Poole recalls with alarm a major blackout in Boston right on Huntington Avenue where the theater is located. "There was no backup, no DR! The place was shut down for two or three days and we lost quite a bit

of business. It was very frightening. And the outsource company had nothing to say but, 'Sorry, we don't have any DR for you.'"

But today, "if we had the place burn down," explains Poole, "I could get people their data. I can get them their email all the time and the ticketing, the most important things in, let's say, a couple of hours."

AppAssure makes this possible by minimizing the time it takes to recover data. "File- or folder-level restores with AppAssure take literally minutes. Full drive restores are done in an hour or less. Traditional tape restoration can take a full day — or more," notes Poole.

It's "just easy," he says. "The software is easy. The restoring is easy. The installation is easy." Poole no longer worries about backup tapes and complicated GUIs or has to spend time deciphering backup error reports. "My time is better spent working on improvements to our infrastructure and planning new technology projects for the future growth of the Huntington Theatre."

"AppAssure," he adds, "makes my attention to data backups an almost 'set it and forget it' activity."

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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