

Cloud Services Provider quickly recovers customer data after Canada's largest wildfire disaster

NIRIX uses disaster recovery as a service (DRaaS) with help from Quest data protection solutions to restore all of its client's critical servers within hours of the Fort McMurray wildfire.

Quest™

CUSTOMER PROFILE



Company	NIRIX
Industry	Information technology
Country	Canada
Website	www.nirix.com

BUSINESS NEED

NIRIX positioned itself as a leading Cloud Services Provider that could save the day for businesses across Canada by offering a new level of data protection: near-instant DRaaS.

SOLUTION

By building its disaster recovery service using Rapid Recovery and Dell hardware, NIRIX was able to offer outstanding DRaaS. When one customer was forced to evacuate its headquarters due to the largest wildfire in the history of Alberta, known as the Fort McMurray wildfire, NIRIX was able to restore all critical servers within four hours. That kept the customer in business for the entire three-month duration of the wildfire.

BENEFITS

- Drives revenue by enabling development and delivery of a successful disaster recovery service
- Ensures business continuity, including restoring one client's critical servers within four hours of an emergency evacuation
- Enables almost immediate recovery through virtual standby, with nearly no data loss

SOLUTIONS AT A GLANCE

- Data protection



“Many businesses think a strong disaster recovery plan is too expensive — until something like Fort McMurray happens. Then they realize how much more expensive a weak disaster recovery plan can be.”

Steven Hsu, President and CEO, NIRIX

When that once-in-a-century disaster comes roaring at your business, you quickly realize there are only two kinds of companies: those that have a plan, and those that wish they had a plan.

No organization likes to think that the worst-case disaster recovery scenarios they must plan for will ever happen. But NIRIX, a privately-owned Cloud Services Provider (CSP), knows that disasters can and do strike when you least expect them. NIRIX offers a range of enterprise-class cloud services including oneRecovery™, DRaaS built around Rapid Recovery and Dell hardware. DRaaS spelled the difference between business continuity and extinction when a NIRIX client was forced to evacuate its headquarters in the face of the Fort McMurray wildfire, the costliest disaster in Canadian history. The wildfire grew to more than 5,900 km² within days, then lasted three months.

DELETED FILES? RESTORE FROM BACKUP. DELETED BUILDINGS? YOU NEED DRAAS.

NIRIX provides small and medium-sized businesses with a range of advanced cloud computing services, such as Microsoft Exchange messaging and collaboration, virtual desktop computing, Windows Server hosting, and data and workload protection services. In recent years, the company recognized another opportunity: offering DRaaS.

“As businesses deploy more virtual servers, they are no longer looking for just data backup — they’re looking for a complete disaster recovery solution,” explains Steven Hsu, president and CEO of NIRIX. “In addition, they want to be able to recover faster if they experience a disaster. However, with the file-based backup product we were using, we weren’t able to achieve these goals for our customers. We needed to offer a reliable solution that was easy to deploy and maintain, and that could help businesses restore normal operations in the event of a major disaster.”

NIRIX knew that it wanted to offer efficient backups, near-real-time replication, easy restores of files and other objects, and quick recovery of entire servers. The right solution would need to efficiently and effectively protect on the order of 30TB of its customers’ virtual servers and infrastructure.

A ROBUST SOLUTION ENABLES A “COMPELLING SERVICE”

The NIRIX datacenter team carefully reviewed the backup, replication and recovery solutions on the market. “We evaluated Veeam’s image-based backup solution, but it didn’t offer the ability to back up or replicate physical machines,” recalls Hsu. “Since a lot of organizations still have critical systems on physical servers, we eliminated that tool.”

One solution stood out from the competition during the feature comparison: Rapid Recovery. Extensive testing proved its value to NIRIX. “After internal performance and feature testing, we deployed Rapid Recovery internally for even more testing,” says Hsu. “We found that Rapid Recovery would enable us to develop a service that protects systems, apps and data on both physical and virtual servers. Rapid Recovery enables efficient backups, virtual standby and quick recovery of data and applications, whether it’s a complete server in a disaster scenario or an individual file or folder that was accidentally deleted.”

PRODUCTS & SERVICES

SOFTWARE

Quest® Rapid Recovery.

“Thanks to NIRIX oneRecovery DRaaS powered by Rapid Recovery, Wood Buffalo had all business-critical services fully restored within four hours of initiating the Emergency Response Action Plan.”

Steven Hsu, President and CEO, NIRIX

Using Rapid Recovery, NIRIX was able to build its flexible, turnkey oneRecovery DRaaS and enable IT staff to easily meet ever-tighter recovery time objectives (RTOs) and recovery point objectives (RPOs). Their physical and virtual machines are backed up or replicated on the schedule they specify to a high-performance oneRecovery appliance, built on Dell PowerEdge servers and EqualLogic storage in the NIRIX datacenter; all that is required for recovery is connectivity to the customer's network.

"Using Rapid Recovery, we were able to build a compelling service that gives our customers an offsite replica for disaster recovery — without the huge capital expense of a second datacenter and required infrastructure," Hsu explains. "Customers can move to a flexible operational expense model, and we establish a strong recurring revenue stream."

KEY SYSTEMS UP AND RUNNING JUST FOUR HOURS AFTER A DISASTER

Wood Buffalo Housing & Development Corporation is one of the many NIRIX oneRecovery customers that discovered just how essential it is to have a comprehensive disaster recovery solution in place. On the morning of May 3, when evacuation of Fort McMurray became mandatory, IT manager Dennis Leon was at a conference in New Orleans, half a continent away. At noon, Wood Buffalo's 180 employees had to leave the building on short notice. By 4:00 pm, Leon and Hsu were on the phone, activating the disaster recovery plan they had put in place 18 months before. By May 5, oneRecovery failed over its customer's critical business services to the NIRIX datacenter, and Wood Buffalo was fully operational again.

"Thanks to NIRIX oneRecovery DRaaS powered by Rapid Recovery, Wood Buffalo had all business-critical services, such as email, file, print, security and authentication, and financial applications fully restored within four hours of initiating the Emergency Response Action Plan, and all designated secondary servers up within six hours after that," recalls Hsu. "Within two days, Wood Buffalo had fully restored all its primary and secondary systems. They were able to send and receive email and make and accept payments, keeping their business running."

The quick restoration of critical servers meant nearly seamless business continuity for Wood Buffalo. "The recovery plan and NIRIX oneRecovery DRaaS pretty much let us continue doing business," says Leon. "During the fire we lost communication. People got evacuated to sites around the province and the scene was an absolute calamity. We were in the dark. But having our systems back up and running within a day allowed us to start assessing the whole fire situation and responding to our customers. Without a disaster recovery plan and NIRIX's oneRecovery DRaaS, the continued existence of our business would have been a big question mark."

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE UNTIL YOU LOSE IT

Hsu notes that Wood Buffalo's recovery could have been even faster and more complete. "When they signed up for our service, they chose to back their servers up to our datacenter only nightly. Therefore, we had to restore from their last good backup image, which took a few hours," he explains. "After the disaster, however, they eagerly upgraded their DR plan by adding a secondary oneRecovery appliance, based on Rapid Recovery's

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NIRIX*

virtual standby feature enabled at the NIRIX datacenter. Now the on-premises oneRecovery appliance continuously sends updates to the NIRIX datacenter, where the secondary appliance can be powered up within minutes. In the event of another disaster, they can recover far more recent data.”

The lesson learned, Hsu says, is a simple but critical one: “Many businesses think a strong disaster recovery plan is too expensive — until something like Fort McMurray happens. Then they realize how much more expensive a weak disaster recovery plan can be.”

ABOUT QUEST

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