CHARON-VAX helps reduce failover recovery time and update legacy VAX system

The Challenge

A large financial services company in New Zealand had been running key life insurance applications on an OpenVMS system since its inception in 1989, but the rapid growth of the company was challenging the capacity of their legacy VAX system. Another concern was that the system was not fully compatible with best-practice disaster-recovery systems, such as EMC SAN and the use of virtual tape backups, which were in place across the rest of the company's network.

Since the financial services company was dependent on the legacy system for key client and adviser data and applications, the challenge was to replicate the exact functionality of the legacy software on a modern platform. They wanted a system that was capable of supporting a state-of-the-art failover and failback disaster recovery site, without incurring the extensive cost of rewriting and testing all of their existing software.

The Solution

The company's IT partner for this project, Fujitsu New Zealand, confidently recommended Stromasys's CHARON-VAX software as the ideal solution, based on its proven ability to exactly replicate legacy VAX systems. The company's project leader agreed that the CHARON-VAX software stood out as "the obvious solution to go for" because it was the only one available that could deliver an exact functional replication.

As this was the first cross-platform virtualization software installation undertaken by the company, it was agreed that UBS would provide an on-site team to ensure the implementation went smoothly. "The active involvement of UBS in the project was an important confidence factor," explained Fujitsu account executive Russell Derecourt. "UBS had already successfully completed 21 VAX and AXP migrations, and there was absolutely no doubt that their VAX system migration skills, expertise, and experience were unmatched in Australia and New Zealand."

Once the ability of the Charon software to exactly replicate the legacy system's functionality had been tested, the installation team focused on testing an improved disaster recovery system that would enable rapid restart and recovery of business operations using the newly installed CHARON-VAX software.

PARTNER PROFILE

United Business Solutions (UBS) is a privately owned Australian company focused on meeting the IT needs of companies and government bodies. UBS is Australia's foremost virtual VAX migration specialist and is accredited by Stromasys to supply the CHARON-VAX virtual system.

In addition to system migration, UBS also provides a full range of IT services, including access solutions, servers, storage, backup, recovery, archiving, security, intelligent detection systems, applications, networking, and operational management services. For more information, please visit:

www.ubsolutions.com.au

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The objective was to implement a disaster recovery solution with a maximum recovery time of five minutes, which would be tape-free and compatible with the customer's EMC SAN system. Accordingly, UBS tested the failover to a DR site without OpenVMS clustering or Volume Shadow software, to demonstrate its capacity to deliver a simple, reliable, bidirectional failover/failback solution.

Working closely with the financial services company's on-staff VAX specialists, UBS was rapidly able to eliminate any minor compatibility problems during the testing phase, and the actual installation took only a few hours over a weekend.

The Result

The financial services company successfully transferred their VAX software functionality to a modern computing environment, ensuring that the new system successfully emulated the legacy system without any changes to the application or user interfaces. If their needs grow in the future, expanding the system will be both simple and economical.

The improved performance of the failover/failback disaster-recovery system is a marked improvement on the legacy system, which was neither as quick nor as easy to failover. The upgraded disaster recovery process is very straightforward and has passed every test.

The backup system itself is now far more efficient, with the CHARON-VAX built-in virtual tape application facilitating data transfer to the EMC SAN system and reducing data transfer time by more than 90%. They gained further savings by replacing the cumbersome VAX/VMS servers with a modern Intel server that simply slots into a rack and requires far less energy to operate and cool. As the financial services company's project leader concluded, "This was a successful project that met all its objectives in terms of budget, time, and outcome."

« The CHARON-VAX software stood out as the obvious solution to go for because of its ability to exactly replicate the VAX/VMS legacy system. »

Project Manager,
Financial services company

About Stromasys

Stromasys is the original and leading provider of enterprise-class cross-platform virtualization solutions, including PDP-11, Digital VAX and Alpha, HP 3000, and SPARC servers. The company extends the life cycle of business and mission-critical systems through virtualization, modernization, and system enhancement.

Founded in 1998 and headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, and in Boston, Massachusetts, with sales offices as well as engineering, development, and research labs located around the world, Stromasys has implemented more than 5,000 cross-platform virtualization solutions for the world's leading companies in over 50 countries.

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