Zerto
a Hewlett Packard Enterprise company

Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic

Case Study

When Health is at Stake: Disaster Recovery for Epic with Zerto Virtual Replication

BUSINESS

Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic

INDUSTRY

Medical

APPLICATION

Epic - Electronic Health Records

LOCATION

Toppenish, WA

SIZE

42 VMs

SOLUTION

A simple and complete disaster recovery solution for Epic with minimal data loss and recovery time

CHALLENGES

BC/DR for Epic:
- Aggressive service levels for EPIC
- A disaster recovery solution that would support growth
- Flexible disaster recovery that would not disrupt the carefully configured EPIC environment

SOLUTION

Zerto Virtual Replication:
- Installs seamlessly into the existing environment with no configuration changes
- A few clicks execute a robust disaster recovery plan
- Adapts to the changing environment ensuring there is no exposure

The Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic (YVFWC) redesigned their electronic health records system in 2014. The team deployed Epic to handle medical records and behavioral health. The system is significant because it is the application that supports all business and medical operations. If Epic were unavailable, the delivery of health services would be near impossible. As YVFWC has experience with datacenter outages, they knew they needed the best solution for disaster recovery for Epic.

In 2013, Zerto virtual replication was deployed, delivering very aggressive recovery point objectives (RPOs) and recovery time objectives (RTOs). Disaster recovery processes for Epic are typically very complex and require a significant amount personnel and time. We executed a successful and complete failover and failback disaster recovery (DR) test with just two people. Senior management was very impressed with its almost unbelievable ease of use.

NO STRANGER TO OUTAGES

During a test of its fire suppression system in 2013, the Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic suffered a catastrophic datacenter outage. The system was not wired properly and, according to YVFWC systems engineer Todd Pappas, "it brought the entire datacenter down. We had a lot of corruption. It took us a long time to come back up." He added, "In retrospect, we just did not have a robust enough disaster recovery solution to bring all the services back up quickly." The team felt very fortunate to discover this during a test.

Having provided healthcare services to migrant and seasonal farm workers for over forty years, turning away patients was both financially and emotionally painful. YVFWC is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization providing comprehensive medical, dental, and social services for more than 139,000 people throughout the Pacific Northwest. Yakima has roughly 2,000 full-time and part-time employees, with 21 medical clinics, 10 dental clinics, and a total of 49 programs.

"When you are dealing with legacy replication systems," explained Pappas, "it drives up your RTO, because it's not like Zerto, where you have four or five clicks and you are failed over. It is very cumbersome when you are in the midst of a disaster, and you are trying to fail over using a legacy system. There are a lot of scripts you have to follow in order to bring your systems up at a disaster recovery site."

DR THAT IS COST-EFFECTIVE AND EASY TO USE

Shortly after the datacenter outage, YVFWC began looking for a better BC/DR solution. It did not take long for Pappas and his colleagues to learn about Zerto. "We found them online, through a blog. Zerto won Best of Show at VMworld 2011, a quite accurate designation."

Yakima needed a DR solution that was neither complex nor costly. "We have limited staff, and we are not in an urban area," said Pappas. "Finding and retaining skilled staff can be a challenge, and just general maintenance can be a challenge in itself. We needed something simple, the Zerto solution was a great fit for us."

"After going through a disaster, and having to turn patients away, Zerto was a pretty easy sell. We needed to write up a justification for our management, so I bulleted these points: ease-of-use, cost, an efficient system, and it just works. We know that Epic will be available so we can continue to give the best patient care. "

Todd Pappas
Systems Engineer, Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic

"Zerto supports continuity of services—we are always going to be able to provide our patients services, unless the clinic doesn't have power. The Zerto solution is just good business continuity. It allows the doctors to do their job and treat patients. Patient care and satisfaction are paramount in our industry. Revenues are important, but patient safety is most important."

Todd Pappas
Systems Engineer, Yakima Valley FWC

"Zerto," added Pappas, "is hypervisor-based. It's like one-stop shopping. Everything is in a single pane of glass. It is easy for us to use; there are not a lot of moving parts."

"The costs of the solution," said Pappas, "are kept to a minimum with Zerto. It is software-based, and it is all virtualized. There is no hardware involved, besides our own infrastructure for the DR site."

"We were looking at EMC's RecoverPoint," explained Pappas. "The cost was quite high, and it is not storage-system-agnostic. With Zerto, it doesn't matter what kind of system you put in place. It is neutral in that particular area."

After their research, putting Zerto to the test was the final step. "We did our own testing in-house," said Pappas, "and it worked really well. We then pulled the trigger and decided to implement Zerto."

ROBUST, EFFICIENT DISASTER RECOVERY

The team at YVFWC began their deployment of Zerto virtual replication in 2013. The implementation was very simple, with the product up and running in just a couple of hours. Immediately, they began to realize the power of Zerto. RPOs were usually around 10 seconds, far exceeding the 5 minute objective. As the team moved to Epic to handle all electronic health records, they were confident that Zerto would be the right solution for disaster recovery. After executing a disaster recovery test, failover and failback in just 45 minutes, they confirmed it.

Pappas noted how impressed Yakima's upper management was by the EHR failover test. "It only took two people to do the failover. With other solutions, you would need a team of people. The executive team was amazed with the aggressive performance with just two people running the test."

Pappas added that "even Epic, our EHR vendor—I think 87% of the Stage 7 clinics run their system—even they were impressed by how effortlessly we failed over and back."

"We have not had problems with Zerto," said Pappas. "When you are in a disaster-testing situation, it seems like there is always something wrong with the system you're using. But we haven't seen that with Zerto. You might have issues, something that you did not find, protect, and failover—something that was mission-critical. But as far as the system itself, Zerto has been very robust."

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