

BKR (BUREAU KREDIET REGISTRATIE)

EMC RecoverPoint helps credit registration bureau gain database consistency on its mainframe and servers

ESSENTIALS

Challenges

- Integration of mainframe and servers on one SAN
- Better disaster recovery facility in case of a major disaster in Tiel

Solutions

- EMC CLARiiON CX4-120
- EMC RecoverPoint
- EMC Data Domain

Key benefits

- Environment is easier to manage and maintain
- Less chance of data loss in the event of a disaster
- No more data on tape

BKR credit registration bureau was established in 1965 and employs over 100 employees in Tiel. BKR provides financial service providers and loan companies with objective and reliable information about a person's creditworthiness. By informing member organizations (participants) about consumers' loans and cell phone subscriptions, BKR assists participants with their evaluation about whether or not it is responsible to provide a loan. This is how BKR helps prevent consumers from borrowing more than is justified and limits the financial risk for affiliated organizations. BKR carries out its business within the scope of the Financial Supervision Act.

BKR IMPROVES STABILITY AND CONTINUITY WITH A NEW SAN

To effectively carry out these activities, BKR maintains several systems, the largest of which is the Centraal Krediet Informatiesysteem—CKI (central credit information system). This database contains details of more than 11.5 million people. Each year, BKR provides information more than 19 million times to affiliated organizations, both at the national and European level. In addition, consumers can inquire about their own data. The security of this data is of the highest priority. High availability is also critical, especially now that the organization wants to provide realtime information online to its members via BKR. This is why BKR is investing in a new SAN.

BETTER DISASTER RECOVERY FACILITIES

Previously, mortgage companies and other lenders sent a credit application to BKR and received a reply the next day, but now participants want to directly view the data in real time. Large organizations have their own secure connections to the database in Tiel, but smaller organizations are still dependent on the faxed reply. They will be very happy with BKR Online, a secure website where participants retrieve information via a secure connection. "This makes a 24x7 service even more important," says Ben Rikken, senior system administrator.

To ensure high availability, BKR has two identical data centers in Tiel. However, this is not adequate if a disaster were to cause both data centers to fail. Rikken still clearly remembers the evacuation in 1990 because of high water. "Fortunately, it did not flood here. But it did make us realize that we needed a backup site at another location." That place was Lelystad, where the daily backup tapes are stored. "If a major disaster occurs and the Tiel computer center is no longer available, it is possible to lose transactions because we do a backup to tape only once a day. Fortunately, that has never happened, but obviously, this situation is not ideal." BKR also wanted to use virtualization, and there was a need for extra disk space.

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BEN RIKKEN,
SENIOR SYSTEM ADMINISTRATOR

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SERVERS AND MAINFRAME ON ONE SAN

It was clear that a new SAN could handle these needs. Rikken wanted to bundle the data from the mainframe and Microsoft Windows servers together in the new storage environment. “That was not the case in the past and that created extra work for us,” says Rikken. This is an obvious requirement and meant that three of the four suppliers had to be dropped. “There are a lot of suppliers who can provide a SAN for Windows servers, but EMC is the only one that offers the RecoverPoint solution to provide consistency across both databases on a mainframe and Windows servers.”

This also led to the choice of Unisys as an implementation partner. “They’ve been our storage supplier for years and know us inside out. They know exactly what the background is behind our needs and desires. And, they are very effective at anticipating them.”

For example, BKR wanted to be able to pick up the entire environment and put it down somewhere else. “We have two data centers in Tiel: a production data center and a backup data center. Eventually, we want to move this mirrored backup data center in its entirety to Lelystad so that we no longer need to keep three operating environments,” explains Rikken.

Unisys proposed a production environment based on the EMC® CLARiiON® CX4-120. With EMC RecoverPoint, the consistency between production and backup site is preserved for both the mainframe and the Windows environment. In addition, this tool provides data replication between the production and disaster recovery location. If there is a disaster, then BKR can make the system available again very quickly by using snapshots. BKR uses EMC Data Domain® for backups, which performs data deduplication. “This is important if we move the disaster recovery facility to Tiel in the near future,” says Rikken.

SIMPLER, FASTER, AND MORE RELIABLE

The implementation took place in 2010 without major problems. “It went without a hitch,” observes Rikken. BKR is very pleased with the new SAN. Maintenance and administration is simpler because the mainframe and the servers are housed in one SAN. “Previously, storage was spread across multiple servers, which all had their own disk. You had to move data when there was a risk of a server running out of space. It is easier to manage now that all data is stored in the SAN,” says Rikken.

The next step is moving the backup location that is now in Tiel to another location. Then the risk of data loss from a disaster will be much smaller. “The new SAN has provided more stability and continuity. This means availability will increase. Soon, when we want to start using the new disaster recovery center, we can just pick up the backup environment and then set it down right there. If a major problem occurs where the systems fail at Tiel, then we lose a few transactions at most. That gives us peace of mind,” concludes Rikken.

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