PINNACLE ENTERTAINMENT

Leading resort operator transforms gaming innovation with EMC Data Domain

OVERVIEW

Pinnacle Entertainment is a leading developer, owner, and operator of seven gaming resorts and entertainment centers in Louisiana, Indiana, Ohio, and Missouri. Several Pinnacle properties are under development, including an ownership stake in Vietnam's first large-scale integrated resort.

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

With an expanding network of resorts, Pinnacle Entertainment could no longer rely on tape backup to protect its growing volumes of business and customer data. Lacking a standardized backup environment, Pinnacle's headquarters and properties were using various backup solutions, including Symantec Backup Exec, Symantec NetBackup, and a customized backup solution for IBM i data.

In addition, tapes were transported from each of Pinnacle's eight properties to its data center in Las Vegas—a time-consuming practice that risked potential data loss. And delays restoring from tape slowed Pinnacle's ability to innovate and test new gaming enhancements.

Pinnacle determined that the only backup and recovery solution that could support both its IBM i and open systems environments was an EMC® Data Domain® deduplication storage system.

Jason Stump, vice president of IT infrastructure, Pinnacle Entertainment, comments, "The applications running in our IBM i environment are the cream of the crop so protecting that data is critical. We didn't consider any solutions other than Data Domain because it supports both IBM i and VMware environments and offers outstanding data deduplication technology."

SOLUTIONS

Pinnacle standardized on Data Domain systems for backup and recovery in all of its Louisiana and Indiana resorts, and Las Vegas data center, replacing its tape infrastructure. Local backups are replicated to a Data Domain system at Pinnacle's Las Vegas production data center, and are then replicated to a site in Baton Rouge, Louisiana for disaster recovery.

Data Domain systems protect all of Pinnacle's IBM i applications, including Bally Technologies ACSC casino management system, Agilisys LMS hotel management system, Agilisys MMS purchasing and inventory management system, and Infor Infinium HR, payroll, fixed assets, and general ledger system. In addition, the company's Windows applications, including Active Directory, and its VMware environment are backed up to Data Domain.

Pinnacle is highly virtualized with VMware® vSphere™ across all of its properties and data centers.

EMC²®

EMC Professional Services assisted Pinnacle with the design and implementation of the Data Domain backup and recovery environment.

"EMC's services and support teams have been very easy to work with," reflects Stump. "If a deadline moved up, they understood the urgency and accommodated us. EMC's responsiveness and extensive knowledge have been refreshing. We never have to wait. EMC support is definitely faster than what we've seen from other vendors."

FASTER BACKUPS, DISASTER RECOVERY ENABLED

Data Domain systems have eliminated the security weaknesses associated with tape while improving backup and recovery performance dramatically. Thanks to Data Domain inline deduplication, Pinnacle is realizing 20 to 40 times deduplication of backup data and faster backups.

In addition, Data Domain systems enabled Pinnacle to establish disaster recovery to further protect its information assets.

"Because we replicate the Data Domain systems from all of our sites, we now have a disaster recovery strategy," says Stump. "That's something we weren't able to do effectively with tape."

> "Data Domain systems are helping us transform the way we innovate new products and deliver a world-class entertainment experience to our customers."

Jason Stump
Vice President of IT Infrastructure at Pinnacle Entertainment

SPEEDING INNOVATION TO CUSTOMERS

Pinnacle is leveraging Data Domain systems for faster data restores, which allows the development team to enhance applications more quickly and speed new innovations to its gaming customers.

"Before, it took several days for us to get a backup tape from the casinos," notes Stump. "Now we can restore data within an hour and a half, which allows us to immediately upload the data into our casino system and make updates or changes. That way we can get new capabilities out to customers much faster."

One example is the company's universal one-card system, which allows Pinnacle's customers to use a single card in any of its resorts.

Stump explains, "To roll out a program like the one-card, we have to first test it on all of our casino systems. We're now able to refresh our testing environment at Gaming Labs International and verify new services in a few days instead of weeks like before. Data Domain systems are helping us transform the way we innovate new products and deliver a world-class entertainment experience to our customers."

SIGNIFICANT COST SAVINGS

With Data Domain systems, restoring data is also less expensive. Previously, if someone inadvertently deleted a file, it cost Pinnacle $250 to expedite shipment of the backup tape from its offsite storage facility, followed by many more hours to find and upload the file.

Thanks to the reliability and efficiency of the Data Domain systems, Pinnacle plans to eventually be 100 percent tapeless, which will save the company in transportation, tape, and offsite storage costs.

DATA DOMAIN SIMPLIFIES BACKUP ADMINISTRATION

Pinnacle has seen dramatic changes in backup administration since implementing Data Domain systems. Rather than spending 20 hours per week overseeing the tape systems, IT needs just four hours to manage Data Domain.

"Data Domain operates very smoothly with our IBM i and VMware environments, so backup administration is much easier," notes Stump.

With Data Domain systems, Stump is confident that Pinnacle Entertainment has a solid backup and recovery solution it can rely on for the long term.

"We get instant disaster recovery, standardization, and all kinds of things we never had before," he concludes. "Because we no longer have to worry about our backups, we can now focus our time on enhancing the experience for our customers and building innovation for the future."

CONTACT US

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