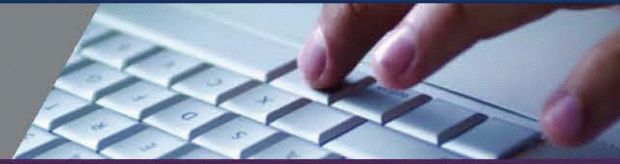


Iron Mountain Solves Data Protection Problems



“We can already tell these solutions are easing our jobs.”

– David Arbour, IT Manager, Gas Operations Division of Airgas®

CUSTOMER: Airgas®, Radnor, PA

BUSINESS: Providing industrial, medical, and specialty gases nationwide

CHALLENGE: Protecting data for a widely distributed workforce

PRODUCTS: Connected® Backup for PC, LiveVault®, DataDefense™, Off-site Tape Vaulting



Fresh Air

Airgas is the largest US distributor of industrial, medical, and specialty gases to industrial and commercial markets. Airgas also provides equipment, tools, and safety supplies through over 700 locations nationwide. Airgas is the largest US producer of nitrous oxide and dry ice, and a leading distributor of process chemicals, refrigerants, and ammonia products.

The Gas Operations Division of Airgas operates air separation units, carbon dioxide production plants, nitrous oxide production plants, and dry ice production plants nationwide. Gas Operations also includes many manufacturing, warehouse, and distribution sites. An extensive staff of mobile sales representatives and field technicians service customers all over the country.

Problems in the Air

The IT group of Gas Operations faces several major challenges in supporting more than 600 employees nationwide with a staff of only four. For example, many of the mobile sales representatives and field technicians use laptops and work away from office locations. These employees sometimes lose track of their laptops, either through misplacing them or through theft. One of the main concerns of IT was to protect vital business data on laptops, to prevent that data from falling into the wrong hands. In addition, IT wanted to be able to rapidly replicate lost data onto a new laptop so that an employee could quickly continue working after a loss.

The IT staff faced a number of difficulties in solving their laptop problems. “Although we needed to protect the data on laptops, we didn’t want to encrypt the entire disk drive,” says David Arbour, IT manager of the Gas Operations Division. IT had implemented full-disk encryption before, and had encountered problems with running their applications, as well as with corrupted data.

The Gas Operations Division uses Iron Mountain Off-site Tape Vaulting to securely store tapes from two locations, and Arbour was familiar with Iron Mountain products and services. He found that DataDefense™ had the features he needed to protect employee laptops properly.

DataDefense protects sensitive and confidential data on all computers, including laptops, whether in or out of the office. DataDefense supports regulatory compliance through intelligent file and folder encryption. If a computer is lost or stolen, DataDefense can destroy sensitive data automatically to prevent it from falling into the wrong hands.

“We like that encryption is possible at the file level, rather than at the drive level,” Arbour says. This encryption method is less intrusive for users than other solutions. Should a user fail to logon correctly, it is a simple matter for IT to use their encryption key to decrypt files. Arbour also appreciates the ease of

administering DataDefense remotely. “DataDefense is easy to set up and administer,” he says.

To ensure that all laptop data was always backed up and available for restoration, Gas Operations IT also implemented the Connected® Backup for PC solution. Iron Mountain’s patented technologies reduce the volume of backed-up data up to 85 percent. For example, Delta Block® sends only the changed data in files, and SendOnce® eliminates duplicate files by saving each file only once. These patented technologies reduce backup time, and enable backup even over the low-bandwidth connections that remote users employ.

The Connected solution runs operates automatically, in the background, whenever remote users connect to the Internet. No user interaction is necessary. “Users don’t even know it’s running,” says Arbour.

Clearing the Air

In addition to their laptop issues, IT also wanted to provide a workable backup and restore solution for all servers at their facilities. However, Gas Operations includes many small, remote sites far away from corporate servers. Moreover, many of these sites do not have access to high-speed data connections, but must rely on low-bandwidth 56 kbps connections.

“We didn’t have a workable solution,” says Arbour. Many backup products could not work efficiently enough over the low-bandwidth connections available. IT tried using onsite, external hard drives, but this proved unsatisfactory. The plan relied on users to initiate backups, but this method wasn’t dependable enough to provide adequate protection. Also, the backed-up data still remained onsite, so that any site disaster that affected the computers would also affect the backups.

Iron Mountain’s LiveVault® online backup and restore solution for servers overcomes these obstacles. LiveVault’s superior data reduction technologies compress data, to reduce and optimize transmission time, especially over low-bandwidth connections. LiveVault provides fully automated, “hands-free” off-site storage and guaranteed recovery. Gas Operations IT found that LiveVault was quick to roll out to their sites, and easy to administer.

“Users don’t call when it works right, and LiveVault works right,” says Arbour.

Breath of Fresh Air

Arbour reports almost no feedback from users, which is the way he likes it. “Users don’t call when it works right, and LiveVault works right,” Arbour says.

“In addition, Connected was simple to set up and use, right out of the box,” says Arbour. Even in their first months of using the Connected solution, users were able to recover data quickly and easily. For example, an executive preparing to perform a presentation found he couldn’t logon to his laptop. Using Connected, he was able to recover the file to another computer and complete the presentation successfully.

Conclusion

The combination of DataDefense, Connected Backup for PC, LiveVault, and Off-site Tape Vaulting gives the IT staff of Gas Operations the data protection solutions they need. “We can already tell these solutions are easing our jobs,” says Arbour.



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