

Replacement of Symantec Backup Exec with Acronis True Image

Overview

The following commentary explains the technical issues concerning the Backup and Restore software your server is currently using.

This software is responsible for copying your company data and an image of your server onto tape. The Backup is performed 5 nights per week, and this is one of the processes we monitor. This procedure is very successful for protecting both your company data and also your email system. MysonPages have never failed to retrieve company data and email data from tape. However, when we have been required to perform a Disaster recovery procedure, the results of late have been far from satisfactory.

A typical Disaster Recover (DR) procedure would involve restoring your complete server image onto a new server. Usual reasons for DR are after theft, fire or irrecoverable breakdown of your existing hardware.

Please read the bullet points below:

- VERITAS Backup Exec is the software that protects the data on your server through tape Backup and Restore functionality
- VERITAS Backup Exec is also the software that offers recovery of your server should there be a disaster, i.e. water/smoke/fire damage, theft, etc
- VERITAS Backup Exec was supplied by DELL as part of your Small Business Server bundle
- This version of Veritas Backup Exec is OEM, and is sold with new server hardware only. This is very cheap, because the software is for that machine only and lives and dies with the machine.
- This OEM version is not upgradeable, and therefore you have to purchase a retail version when needing technical improvement, at greater cost.
- As part of this software package, VERITAS included the Intelligent Disaster Recovery (IDR) option. VERITAS considered this option was bundled free with the software.
- MysonPages have been using this IDR option for many years.
- SYMANTEC have acquired Veritas and now market the product as SYMANTEC Backup Exec
- SYMANTEC believe that IDR abilities were 'miss-sold' by Veritas, and IDR does not cover the requirements of true, Disaster Recovery. This action has now been labelled as 'Bare-Metal Disaster Recovery' in the IT industry.
- True disaster recovery is the ability to restore your server onto a different piece of hardware
- SYMANTEC have released a product named System Recovery, which performs True Bare-Metal Disaster Recovery
- Therefore, any technical support required for IDR, results in the recommendation of using SYMANTEC System Recovery, as Backup Exec is no longer being supported for this function.

The screenshot below is a warning displayed when selecting the Intelligent Disaster Recovery (IDR) within the installation of SYMANTEC Backup Exec v 12.5 (the latest version, we install on new servers). This is included to illustrate how SYMANTEC are promoting this product, even when you install the latest version of Backup Exec. SYMANTEC have not developed the IDR option within the Backup software, they have now produced a separate package.



The events listed above have caused Myson a lot of concern, and as your IT provider, we have taken this situation seriously. We have evaluated the new Symantec software, but we have also taken an in-depth analysis of an alternative product named Acronis True Image for Small Business Server.

If we stay with Symantec, the only option is to install a second piece of software to provide for Disaster Recovery, and this bears a significant cost in terms of software licensing alone.

If we now move to Acronis True Image, the software required is 50% of the cost of the Symantec product, and from our testing and the pilots we have run to date proves to be a more powerful product. It will also replace your current backup and reliance on Backup Exec, which will at some stage in the future be discontinued.

What we have done

In light of this situation we have

- Evaluated Acronis True Image and Symantec System Restore
- Tested the Backup functions and the Disaster Recovery of both
- Performed DR at a number of clients sites – recovered their systems to alternative hardware
- Costed both solutions – Acronis and Symantec
- Rolled Acronis to new customers for backup and disaster recovery
- Tested and monitored performance over 1 month period

We have also 'reviewed' our backup strategy and have

- Checked that customers are using the latest versions of their current installed software
- Patches applied where relevant
- Checked Capacity – for current and future use
- Recommended replacement hardware where required.
- Developed a number of solutions depending your own system
- Ensured that new Acronis customers also covered by annual support contact



Summary

- Symantec no longer actively support the Intelligent Disaster Recovery (IDR) option in Backup Exec.
- Symantec now sell a separate product to provide this functionality.
- To get what limited support is still available for IDR with Symantec a support contract is required.
- As customers purchase an OEM copy with their server, this is not available.
- When we have used telephone and email support, the answer is effectively 'Buy the other product'
- It is also suspected that Backup Exec will be discontinued as a product in the future.
- Acronis True Image provides backup **and** disaster recovery functionality
- We will no longer supply Backup Exec with new systems, we will supply Acronis True Image
- We will back-fit Acronis to current systems over the next 2 month period
- We will ensure all customers covered by support contract from Acronis
- We will provide Acronis at a discounted rate due to bulk purchase by MysonPages.

We will contact you soon to discuss what is required for your system in terms of software, hardware and reconfiguration. This will be specific to your needs and the amount of data you currently back up.

David Brereton
MysonPages.com

☎ office: 0845 260 5525

🌐 web: www.mysonpages.com
