

Shifting to an Automatic Backup System

Tivoli® Storage Manager lets Sandia Laboratory Federal Credit Union focus on what it does best: delivering leading edge financial services



Like all banking customers, the 50,000+ members of the Sandia Laboratory Federal Credit Union want everything: low interest rates on loans, and high returns on deposits; friendly, personal attention in branches; and 24/7 access to their accounts.

Based in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Sandia Laboratory Federal Credit Union (SLFCU) provides financial services to employees of Sandia National Laboratories, their families and to the employees of 75 other high-technology companies. SLFCU's edge over its competitors, including many large national banks, is creative use of technology.

"We're always looking at new technology to improve our efficiencies and service," says Kent Bible, Vice President of Information Systems. "Because of their professions, our members expect high-tech services. We have a higher percentage of Internet banking usage than other financial institutions."

SLFCU runs its core business applications on IBM® AS/400® and iSeries™ servers. It uses Intel® servers from IBM and other vendors for other important applications, like home banking and e-mail. As SLFCU added more Intel servers to support new services like Internet banking, it got bogged down with a basic issue: backing up all those servers.

"The process involved moving external tape drives from server to server," Mr. Bible recalls. "Each server required a reboot to recognize the tape drive. Our Domino™ server had to be stopped before backup because of file locks." Insisting that its backup procedures not interfere with members' and employees' access to applications, the credit union had operational staff coming in before dawn to perform backups.

Using IBM technology, Sirius Computer Solutions, an IBM Premier Business Partner based in San Antonio, Texas, helped put SLFCU's backup back on track. It provided a fully automated backup system, consisting of an xSeries server running IBM Tivoli Storage Manager software, and an IBM tape library.

"The peace of mind provided by the combination of the IBM @server™ xSeries®, IBM TotalStorage™ Tape Library and Tivoli Storage Manager software means the Sandia Laboratory Federal Credit Union can focus on their core business and continue to develop new services for their members instead of worrying about storage backup."

Frank J. Baldino, Vice President, Storage Sales, IBM Americas



“Sirius Computer Solutions’ knowledge transfer was very important, because we’re always looking at new technology to improve our efficiencies and service.”

– Kent Bible, Vice President of Information Systems, Sandia Laboratory Federal Credit Union

A new storage system from Sirius Computer Solutions makes backup fast and easy

Sandia Laboratory Federal Credit Union (SLFCU) was backing up some of its Intel servers with external tape drives. Others had internal DAT (Digital Audio Tape) drives. “We had a complicated labeling system to keep track of the different tapes,” Mr. Bible elaborates, “and also to track whether they were off-site or on-site.”

At first, SLFCU considered purchasing tape drives for each server, so that backup could be performed without an operator having to move a tape drive around. Because the backup software used for the tape drives required that some applications be shut down, SLFCU decided to investigate other solutions.

Sirius Computer Solutions showed how a backup system based on Tivoli Storage Manager (TSM) would dramatically simplify backup administration. Best of all, the slight additional cost of this automated solution, compared to purchasing tape drives and backup software for each server, was more than offset by features like TSM’s tape management reports, speed, ease of recovery, and automatic operation.

Sirius has been SLFCU’s primary technology provider for over a decade. “There’s a great deal of trust between our organization and Sirius,” Mr. Bible states. “We’ve always had excellent results with the consultants Sirius has assigned to us.”

Despite this confidence in Sirius’ abilities, Mr. Bible still harbored some concerns. With Intel servers running Windows® XP, Windows 2000, Windows NT® and Windows 98, SLFCU would need a backup solution that could handle multiple operating systems. “With some applications, there are issues with

backups causing problems with files that are open,” Mr. Bible adds. “We wanted to keep these applications active 24 hours a day, if possible.”

IBM Business Partner:	Sirius Computer Solutions
Solutions:	Server Consolidation and Storage Solutions
Territory:	United States
Customer Target:	Cross Industry

Everything’s automatic

Tivoli Storage Manager delivered on all counts. Following installation, Sirius consultants performed simulated recovery tests to make sure the system could protect data on all SLFCU Intel servers, regardless of operating system. Sirius also provided detailed technical training to the person responsible for the backup system, and user training to three operators.

Now, when IT staff arrives in the morning, they check a TSM report on the previous night’s activities. If a server dropped the TSM connection, causing a backup to fail, the report will alert operators so they can correct the problem and perform the backup.

TSM also provides tape management reports, telling operators which tapes should be removed from the IBM tape library and stored off-site, and which tapes should be retrieved from the off-site facility for reuse in the tape library. Backup administration now takes just 30 minutes per day. “With the old way, it was at least two hours, some of them at crazy times,” Mr. Bible notes.

Everything’s fast

Because TSM is running on a dedicated xSeries server, it backs up data to disk before writing it to tape. That makes backup far quicker, and minimizes disruption to applica-

tions and users. TSM also makes it much easier to recover deleted files.

“At least once a week, we get a call from an end user who has accidentally deleted a file,” Mr. Bible says. “Before, it might have taken several hours to restore the file. We’d have to send a courier to an off-site location where the tapes are stored. Now we can restore the data in minutes, because it’s maintained on the xSeries TSM server.”

Focusing on service and growth

Currently, SLFCU has two tape drives in its IBM tape library. If it needs more capacity, it can add up to four more drives. As part of its technical training, Sirius taught SLFCU how to expand the TSM system to accommodate additional servers. “Sirius Computer Solutions’ training and knowledge transfer was very helpful,” Mr. Bible comments.

Now that IT staff are spending less time on backup administration and restoring user files, they can concentrate on more meaningful activities, such as installing patches for applications and making sure security is current. They can also work on new services, such as an application that lets members import credit union statements directly into personal finance software like Quicken and Microsoft Money. New services like these mean greater competitive advantage over SLFCU’s larger rivals.

SLFCU’s goal is to become an “electronic credit union” – without compromising the friendly, personal service it provides in its seven branches. Comments Mr. Bible: “We see the electronic credit union not as technology for its own sake, but as the most practical way to offer our members the opportunity to meet their financial needs in a convenient manner, wherever they are and whenever they want.”

For additional information on how **Sirius Computer Solutions** can help your organization, contact us at **800-460-1237** or visit our Web site at **www.siriuscom.com**.

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