Asigra.

Case Study
Heartland Business Systems Deepens Asigra Partnership to Further Reduce Costs

- Technological ease-of-use and fair licensing model of Asigra Cloud Backup supports IT integrator's business

- Enterprise-grade capabilities of backup platform ensures MSP can protect even the most advanced of SMB customers' IT environments

- Recently migrated to Asigra Converged Data Protection Appliances for MSPs to drive storage costs down to 1¢ per GB/month

HEARTLAND
BUSINESS SYSTEMS

SUMMARY

When SMB customers began requesting automated off-site disaster recovery solutions, Heartland Business Systems (HBS) turned to Asigra Cloud Backup™. Today, more than five years later, Asigra has proven to be a reliable, secure disaster recovery software solution that can be easily installed and connected to its primary and fully redundant data centers. HBS recently implemented two Asigra Converged Data Protection Appliances for MSPs, helping it to dramatically drive down storage costs and improve performance.

BACKGROUND

Heartland Business Systems (HBS), a well-established IT Services Provider, serves Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, and Minnesota from eight locations across the four states, including two data centers. For more than 20 years, HBS has supported small and medium-sized companies, schools, hospitals and government agencies of all sizes with a wide range of technology integration services. More than 150 highly trained engineers provide cloud enablement, security, service desk and business software solutions through partnerships with leading technology vendors.

BUSINESS SITUATION

Beginning in 2010, HBS began to hear requests from a growing number of its SMB customers for better ways to protect their critical business and operational data. Many clients still used backup software that required them to drive physical tapes to an off-site location every day or week. "Customers wanted more of an automated solution," says Dave Cummings, a Data Center Systems Engineer at HBS's Little Chute, WI headquarters.

HBS needed to carefully select a new solution. Any cloud backup and disaster recovery platform had to help keep costs low, both in terms of technology operations and its licensing model. One important aspect was that HBS's engineers needed to be able to efficiently install and manage the backup and disaster recovery software at customers' sites without support from additional data center staff. And as with any data center application, the backup and DR solution would also need to support multi-tenancy and replication to a second data center, so clients always back up at least two copies of data. "From a technical perspective, what I look for is a multi-tenant solution with enterprise features leveraging one solution."

HEARTLAND BUSINESS SYSTEMS

- Primary data center located in Little Chute, WI
- Off-site replication data center in Green Bay, WI
- Two 2U Asigra Converged Data Protection Appliances with 32TB billable capacity for Cloud Backup and Disaster Recovery Storage
- 10 TB storage vault

ASIGRA CLOUD BACKUP™ DELIVERS

- Agentless architecture simplifies installation and ongoing operations in your customers' environment by eliminating the downtime and disruption of deploying and maintaining agents
- Multi-tenancy to manage a number of customers in segregated environments on the same server
- Single consolidated repository simplifies backup and recovery of data that's currently backed up in silos scattered across your customers' environments
- Single-pane-of-glass view allows you to manage from an intuitive web-based dashboard, with visibility across all customers for even the most complex disaster recovery and business continuity strategies, including multiple branch locations and local/remote backup and recovery management of data centers
- Support for private, hybrid and public cloud so you choose the cloud architecture or deployment model that best suits each of your customers' business needs
- N+1 and grid configuration allows you to create numerous nodes to load-balance your backup and recovery processes, and manage more customers concurrently
- Robust APIs are available for integration with various tools used by managed service providers, such as ConnectWise.

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An additional challenge HBS faced was the variety and complexity of systems its clients had to protect. Although its SMB customers typically have 100 users or fewer, HBS knew that some clients were using advanced software platforms like VMware, Microsoft Exchange or even Oracle. "We needed to have the ability to back up many different platforms using one solution," says Cummings, "They may be SMB clients, but many of them have the needs of enterprise IT environments."

SOLUTION

For more than five years now, Asigra Cloud Backup™ has been a perfect match for HBS's business. "Asigra fits our business model," says Cummings. "Each one of our engineers is capable of installing the Asigra software and connecting it back to our data center as a multi-tenant solution. With its agentless architecture, Asigra Cloud Backup is something our engineers don't have to take a lot of time to set up and can effortlessly manage pretty much end-to-end." The platform's built-in replication capability also ensures client data is automatically protected at both HBS's primary data center, and its redundant facility in nearby Green Bay, WI.

Moreover, Asigra's approach to licensing helps HBS keep its costs low. "The licensing model was key for us," says Cummings. "Previously, we were with another large backup vendor, and they billed us based on front-end storage.

"Asigra charged us on stored data, as well as the amount of data recovered. That was key for us in choosing this product. With Asigra's deduplication ratio and compression algorithms, we store less and pay less, as our customers don't restore data very often, so the Asigra Recovery License Model® is a good cost savings."

Dave Cummings, Heartland Business Systems, Data Center Systems Engineer

RESULTS

Today, Asigra Cloud Backup is an integral part of HBS's data center offerings. "In every sales conversation, one of the questions is, 'What do you do for DR?'" says Cummings.

"Our clients can feel confident knowing their data is being protected by the Asigra Cloud Backup solution for both onsite backups and offsite backups," says Cummings. "Our engineering and sales staff appreciate all the enterprise features Asigra offers, so it's an easy sell for them."

Over time, HBS became more confident in its partnership with Asigra. It grew its backup and data recovery business by 30% per year, consistently received knowledgeable support from Asigra's Technical Support team, and attended several Asigra Partner Summits to network with other Service Providers and get insights into the platform's development road map.

THE NEXT CHAPTER: DRIVING STORAGE COSTS LOWER

Recently HBS decided to deepen its partnership with Asigra with the Asigra Converged Data Protection Appliances for MSPs.

"After four years of storing data on our commodity hardware, we were in good standing with Asigra from a software perspective. The Converged Data Protection Appliances for MSPs were the next step for us in strengthening our partnership and driving down storage and server hardware costs."

Dave Cummings, Heartland Business Systems, Data Center Systems Engineer

With its current storage system approaching end-of-life, HBS evaluated the total cost of ownership of Asigra's pre-built, pre-optimized appliances versus building its own storage infrastructure from vendors like HP and Dell. "Based on the way Asigra has designed their hardware appliances and the performance they are achieving with [Linux] FreeBSD operating systems, it's hard to beat," says Cummings. He says storage costs are now 1¢ per GB/month, just as Asigra estimated.

"An important factor in choosing this solution was, 'How do we lower our storage cost?'" says Cummings, "Asigra CDP Appliances were the right fit for lowering our storage costs, our maintenance costs, and with the Asigra Recovery License Model®, our licensing costs as well." The single point of support has also proved valuable: "Asigra fully supports this solution, both hardware and software, from end-to-end."

After a couple of weeks of preparing for a migration, which included changes on HBS Data Center's network and upgrading the Asigra software to the latest version, migration of 8 TB of HBS client data was completed in a single weekend—and Cummings witnessed an immediate performance improvement. "It was night and day in terms of performance," says Cummings. "Just going from Windows Operating System to a Linux-based operating system was a big step towards performance increases, but the appliance hardware itself is also tuned to give a higher level of performance. It's been a good play for us." HBS technicians have also appreciated how much data they can get back from the appliance on a recovery.

As data volumes continue to explode, HBS knows that keeping storage costs as low as possible is a fundamental part of operating a successful cloud backup and disaster recovery business.

"Everyone is trying to get to zero on storage costs right now. The lower we can get our cost, the more profit we can make on a per GB / month basis, and it allows us to offer a lower cost to our customers, which keeps us competitive."

Dave Cummings, Heartland Business Systems, Data Center Systems Engineer

After more than five years working with Asigra, HBS knows it has a trusted partner helping it to succeed.

About Heartland Business Systems

Heartland Business Systems is an IT integration firm that provides technology consulting, network integration, security, business continuity and unified communication solutions. With over 20 years of experience, Heartland has been a value-added provider of IT products and services with over 150 certified technology engineers, programmers and developers on staff with locations in Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin. Now with more than 500 employees, Heartland has in recent years appeared on several international lists of top business technology innovators, including the CRN Tech Elite 250, CRN's Solution Provider 500 and the Fast Growth 100.

For more info, visit: www.hbs.net

About Asigra

Trusted since 1986, Asigra provides organizations around the world the ability to recover their data now from anywhere through a global network of partners who deliver cloud backup and recovery services as public, private and/or hybrid deployments. As the industry's first enterprise-class agentless cloud-based recovery software to provide data backup and recovery of servers, virtual machines, endpoint devices, databases and applications, SaaS and IaaS based applications, Asigra lowers the total cost of ownership, reduces recovery time objectives, eliminates silos of backup data by providing a single consolidated repository, and provides 100% recovery assurance. Asigra's revolutionary patent-pending Recovery License Model provides organizations with a cost effective data recovery business model unlike any other offered in the storage market. Asigra has been recognized as a Gartner Cool Vendor and has been included in the Gartner Magic Quadrant for Enterprise Backup and Recovery Software since 2011. In 2015, Asigra Cloud Backup was also named the Top Enterprise Backup Solution and achieved silver in Storage Magazine's Products of the Year.

More information on Asigra can be found at www.asigra.com