

## Case Study

### Commonwealth Secretariat Finds Switch From Tape to Cloud-Based Backup Brings Peace of Mind



- Intergovernmental agency based in London
- Protection of data on 30 physical servers and multiple virtual servers
- Hybrid cloud backup and recovery deployment



The Commonwealth



Techgate plc

## SUMMARY

As the central institution of the Commonwealth of Nations, the Commonwealth Secretariat traditionally had relied on tape backup solutions to protect close to 3TB of data at its London-based location. Starting in 2005, the organization became increasingly dissatisfied with the performance of tape systems. The intergovernmental agency experienced increasing challenges with both data backup and timely data recovery. Tape backups were becoming too unreliable, expensive, and time-consuming. Though not tied to specific regulations, the Commonwealth Secretariat wanted to have optimal technology and performance in terms of best practices. As an alternative solution to tape, the agency started using DVD to backup critical data, but soon realized that the medium was painfully slow and created storage challenges. After exploring a range of options for a more efficient approach to backup and recovery technology, the Commonwealth Secretariat decided to switch to Techgate plc's Enterprise Cloud Backup service powered by Asigra.

## CUSTOMER OVERVIEW

The Commonwealth Secretariat, located in London, serves as the main intergovernmental agency and central institution of the Commonwealth of Nations (also called the Commonwealth). The Commonwealth is organized through the Commonwealth Secretariat and brings together the 53 Commonwealth countries. The responsibilities of the Commonwealth Secretariat include advising on policy development; facilitating cooperation between member organizations; organizing the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings; and helping countries implement Commonwealth decisions and policies. The agency's purpose is to improve and share experiences on health, governance, trade, etc. across the member countries. Within the Commonwealth Secretariat, IT is part of the corporate services division. Based on the increasing dissatisfaction with tape-based and DVD backup and recovery solutions, the Commonwealth Secretariat's IT department sought a more effective alternative to save time, redirect resources, and improve efficiencies.

## BUSINESS SITUATION

Prior to the Asigra Cloud Backup solution, tape backup provided by Symantec had been the primary data protection technology used by the Commonwealth Secretariat. The agency backed up close to 3TB of data stored across 30 physical servers on Hyper-V VMs. Additionally, the organization used virtual servers to run finance and HR applications

## ENVIRONMENT

- Data under protection includes more than 3TB: 1.2TB protected on active disk and 2TB on BLM archiver
- Protection of 30 physical servers with a large number of Microsoft Hyper-V Virtual Machines (VMs)
- Coverage of a diverse range of applications, including finance and HR, proprietary budgeting and project monitoring, as well as Exchange and SQL database
- Hybrid cloud backup deployment with both local and remote recovery capabilities.

## ASIGRA CLOUD-BASED DATA RECOVERY DELIVERS

- Single integrated solution for all data protection needs
- Policy-based protection based on the user's IT environment and recovery requirements
- Optimization of IT resources for enhanced utilization
- Data encryption that secures data in-flight and at-rest
- High-performance data recovery compared to tape or DVD.

“Part of IT's function is to ensure that everyone in the organization has access to the right tools with the right data. We clearly didn't have that with our cumbersome tape and DVD backup systems. As an intergovernmental agency, it is critical that our data remains both securely stored and easy to access quickly. By modernizing our backup infrastructure with a secure and flexible cloud backup solution, we achieved this.”

**Henry Nyambu, Head of IT,  
Commonwealth Secretariat**

plus proprietary budgeting and project monitoring applications in addition to Microsoft Exchange, and SQL database.

However, a growing number of problems revealed the limitations of tape backups, which were becoming too unreliable, expensive, and time-consuming. Tapes also required a physical storage location offsite, which was inconvenient as well as costly. As an alternative solution to tape, the agency started using DVD technology via proprietary backup software to backup critical data, but soon realized that the medium was painfully slow. It took a half-day just to make sure a backup was completed and at least 2 hours to find the data to recover. Because the data was stored at a bank, the DVDs could only be accessed during the bank's business hours, which was very limiting. The need to warehouse countless DVDs in storage created even more difficulties, and the whole process required an inordinate amount of time from the IT department.

In response, the Commonwealth Secretariat reviewed several alternatives for backup and recovery, including fast optical backup devices and online backup solutions. After this review, the organization's IT department determined that it was necessary to move away from their existing solution to an online service, engaging with Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery specialists Techgate plc. The Commonwealth Secretariat worked with Techgate to deploy a cloud-based backup and recovery solution powered by Asigra.

Founded in 2001, Techgate is a London-based Managed Service Provider, specializing in Business Continuity, High Availability Cloud Infrastructure and Disaster Recovery solutions. Techgate owns and operates its own private data centres and network infrastructure. The company helps organizations to optimize their business continuity and overall IT capabilities using the latest available technology, tailor-made to address unique requirements. The solution delivered by Techgate guaranteed to return precious IT resources by offering dramatically faster and more reliable backup and recovery without the expensive, cumbersome management or time requirements of tape or DVD solutions.

## SOLUTION

Techgate implemented a hybrid cloud backup configuration with an appliance onsite. The solution was configured for daily, weekly, and monthly backups across the agency's 30 physical servers, as well as virtual servers. Applications in use include finance and HR, plus proprietary budgeting and project monitoring applications, Exchange, and SQL database. A local backup cache enabled fast recovery. The agency used Backup Lifecycle Management to ensure that less critical data, would be moved to an archive backup in order to reduce costs.

The new solution completely replaced the Commonwealth Secretariat's outdated tape management and DVD methods with an automated backup and recovery system. This allowed for greater flexibility at a cost that was substantially less expensive and less time-intensive than either of the previous methods. Inconvenient storage systems and half-day backups became a thing of the past.

The solution delivered by Techgate is powered by Asigra Cloud Backup™ software, the industry's leading cloud-based backup and recovery software with over one million installations worldwide. The software is built for efficient operation and easily integrates with public, private and hybrid cloud architectures. Asigra's agentless software architecture provides simple deployment and hands-free management while offering advanced features that include global deduplication, automated mass deployment, autonomic healing and validation restore capabilities. The Commonwealth Secretariat highlighted following capabilities as key factors for selecting the solution:

- Support for both physical and virtualized IT environments
- High performance local and remote backup and recovery (Hybrid Cloud Backup)
- Efficient backup data archiving and long-term data recoverability to meet compliance mandates
- NIST FIPS 140-2 certified security with AES-256 encryption in-flight and at-rest.

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“As a trusted advisor to Commonwealth Secretariat, we understood the security and cost concerns the organization needed to address, and we provided a cloud-based solution to overhaul their backup and recovery strategy. Techgate's experienced team alleviated the agency's concerns with respect to data protection, reliability, and performance, while providing resource savings.”

**Kostas Roungeris, Cloud Solutions Specialist,  
Techgate plc**

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## RESULTS

More than seven years into their partnership with Techgate, the Commonwealth Secretariat remains as pleased with the Asigra-Techgate cloud-based solution as they were at the start of the deployment. After running an ROI comparison of their previous tapes/DVDs solution versus Asigra, the agency realized they had achieved a 12% cost saving in the first year. The IT team cites a long list of advantages with the new solution, including greater security, reliability, and ease-of-use — the solution has become a pivotal part of their Business Continuity strategy since they can now backup and restore data easily. Resource savings, time savings, and better performance are also on the list of advantages.

The agency has performed approximately 20 recoveries per year, including one incident three years ago when a major recovery was needed due to the Exchange server going down. The new cloud backup solution recovered close to 400GB of email in just 48 hours; the IT department estimates that the previous tape/DVD solution would have taken at least 10 days. What's more, IT staff who had previously been mired in tape-based management projects were now free for reassignment to other important IT initiatives.

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“Our customer experience with Techgate has been very positive. Support is instantaneous — there is always someone to answer the phone or email and take our questions, help with management, deal with usage, and provide technical support. What Techgate manages to provide is peace of mind. Their online backup solution is safe, secure, and highly available. I would strongly recommend Techgate and its Asigra-powered solution to other organizations struggling with tape or other backup implementations.”

**Henry Nyambu, Head of IT,  
Commonwealth Secretariat**

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## 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 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 patented 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 2010.

More information on Asigra can be found at [www.recoveryiseverything.com](http://www.recoveryiseverything.com)

