



D&E Lowers Costs, Improves Operation with Unitrends

industry > Telecommunications

challenges >

- > Manually scheduled backup process needed improvement to keep up pace with corporate expansion
- > Addition of company locations increased complexity
- > Excessive time spent performing backup procedures

solution >

- > Three Unitrends DPU 3000s and a mix of smaller DPU models

results >

- > Backup time reduced from 24 to 8 hours
- > Backup operations efficiency allows staff to focus on other projects
- > Secure storage of legally mandated records
- > Lower overall costs

D&E Communications, Inc., is an integrated communications provider that supplies telephone and data access services to more than 177,000 lines in central Pennsylvania. Founded in 1911, the company also offers long distance, D&E Jazzd™ Internet and voice and data network systems integration services. Based in Ephrata, Pennsylvania, D&E employs 725 people, with additional offices in Brownstown, Birdsboro, Lewisburg, Mechanicsburg, King of Prussia and State College. The Technology Council of Central Pennsylvania named D&E as its 2002 Technology Company of the Year, and the Central Penn Business Journal has listed it among the region's 30 fastest-growing companies for three consecutive years.

As D&E rapidly grew, the IT team became increasingly aware of the necessity to improve and streamline its data backup processes and systems. Including email, customer information, and enterprise operating data, the company was facing serious staffing, security, and budget challenges. Those challenges, coupled with enhanced data retention mandates caused the search for a better way to backup its information.

challenge > Rapid Growth Demands More Effective, Reliable Enhanced Backup System

The D&E organization needed to find a backup solution that could accommodate its organization, location structure, and budget.

> “We only have one group of system administrators in a centralized location”, said Craig Greenholt, D&E’s data management Systems Engineer, “but we have servers spread out in six locations across the region. In order to keep up with all our locations and get everything backed up, our old tape-based solution just couldn’t handle the volume, retention, security and schedule demands. The scheduling and tape-swapping logistics alone were growing more and more difficult to manage cost-effectively. We needed to have a way to back up remotely, but without nonstop bandwidth.” >

solution > Complete Data Protection System

The IT team began an extensive evaluation and selection process. Two vendors were in the final selection pool, but the combination of the H.A. Storage Systems’ Value Added Reseller relationship and the clear superiority of Unitrends functionality led to D&E’s decision to select Unitrends. Unitrends’ disk-to-disk approach, as well as its parallel backup and restore, indexing, and automatic data purging confirmed the wisdom of the decision.

> “The Unitrends solution gave us a way to back up the disk and then have one shot at the right hours and dump that data across to one central location,” commented Greenholt. “And, we get special value from Unitrends’ Bare Metal capability that allows us complete data protection through its bootable crash recovery design.” >

The Unitrends solution began improving operations immediately. Initial installation took less than a day, and the transition from VAR to in-house operation took just one more. Greenholt indicates that with the Unitrends parallel backup capability, his backup window has dropped from as much as 24 hours to approximately 8 hours with verification, a major time savings.

results > Reduced Risk, Lower Costs, and Improved Operations

The net result of D&E’s selection of Unitrends is that their critical customer and enterprise information stays current, secure and does both with fewer people and greater operational efficiency than before.

> Said Greenholt, “Our old tape-based system just couldn’t give us the services levels we must commit to our company management. The Unitrends solution gives me confidence that these efficiencies will continue, and I also know that continually improving operations is a promise that Unitrends will help me keep.” >

Since the initial installation, there have been numerous smooth system upgrades, “the cleanest upgrades that I’ve ever dealt with,” said Greenholt. The total solution at D&E now includes seven servers. The DPUs are covered by Unitrends Data Assurance protection plan which includes unlimited software upgrades, phone support and on-site hardware support.

future plans > The initial Unitrends implementation is part of a continuing upgrade of D&E's corporate data integrity program. And Unitrends is an integral part of that planned improvement.

> Concluded Greenholt, "Unitrends was the perfect solution to moving up to the performance and management advantages of disk-to-disk backup. My budget is healthier, and I sleep better knowing that my information environment is securely backed up. We're relying on Unitrends to help us deliver even more backup process improvement as we continue to grow our business." >