

# Centralized and unbiased storage management improves utilization and allows multiple data centers to be viewed as a single environment

## CUSTOMER PROFILE

*As one of the nation's largest mutual firms, this company is a leading provider of individual and company-sponsored retirement plan services. It offers well over 150 funds and employs over 10,000 people to support its 18 million shareholder accounts.*

## Problem

### Effectively managing two large data centers as a single environment

The financial services firm maintains two identical data centers containing primarily EMC storage arrays, Windows and UNIX servers, and VERITAS backup servers. There are approximately 90 arrays used for BCU data copies and for production databases running Oracle and SQL Server. The company routinely switches operations between the two data centers. One site will run all production operations for a period of time, and then IT will cut over to the secondary site for a period of time. This is an extremely effective disaster recovery strategy that exercises the facilities and provides that they are always ready and running, and always up-to-date.

Managing the large heterogeneous data centers had become increasingly burdensome for the IT organization, however. IT needed to manage and monitor the two centers as one environment, but lacked the tools to do so efficiently. The firm also needed more robust reporting capabilities that would allow managers to get a handle on storage utilization, trend and forecast usage, assess backup performance, and monitor user and database consumption.

## Solution

### Vendor-neutral rolled-up views and comprehensive reporting at every level across the infrastructure

After evaluating solutions from all the leading vendors, this financial institution selected Storability Global Storage Manager (GSM) software. It was the only solution that could provide the company with the comprehensive rolled-up view it required of its entire environment. In addition, it was the only solution that supported all of the applications, direct-attached storage, NAS, SAN-attached storage, secondary storage and archive backup systems installed.

When establishing its requirements for an enterprise storage resource management (ESRM) solution, the company felt a third-party solution would be important, but it left the door open for all vendors to state their case. Upon evaluation, the financial institution concluded that independence and objectivity were critical for unbiased reporting. Like many companies, this firm was uncomfortable purchasing a management tool from a company with a vested interest in selling more hardware. GSM software, in contrast, is vendor-neutral and agnostic.

The depth of the software's reporting capabilities was a driving factor in the firm's decision. Until GSM software was implemented, IT staffers manually gathered data and compiled reports for management review. The sheer size of the infrastructure made this task ineffective, however, because the data was often outdated by the time the report was compiled. Plus, the level of manual involvement significantly increased the risk of errors.

With GSM software in place, managers have immediate, real-time access to a wealth of valuable information at every level of the infrastructure, including databases, file systems, and arrays. GSM software can display that information in a variety of ways, depending upon the needs of the user. Global Storage Manager software can, for instance, display how much storage each application is using on a particular device (which verifies that the right device is being used for each type of data), or present the data by business unit or by platform. In addition, users can create personalized GSM software dashboard views that display the information that is most important to their individual job functions.

An important feature was GSM software's ability to identify all servers and file systems that are not part of a scheduled backup job — eliminating a significant data or compliance risk and addressing a major concern common to most data centers. Another big plus in an infrastructure this size was GSM software's ability to identify every change made and when — regardless of how minor — to all assets in the infrastructure. This information is invaluable for efficient troubleshooting.

Company officials also said they were highly impressed with the large number of reference accounts Storability was able to provide, with the technical knowledge and skills of the entire Storability team, and with the company's willingness to generate an enterprise license agreement (ELA) for the software.

## The GSM software advantage

### Improve storage utilization, enhanced management and greater insight into data center operations

Global Storage Manager software provides this financial institution with the ability to effectively monitor and manage two distinct data centers as a single environment. The software makes it easy for the IT organization to track and trend storage utilization at any level of the environment, which has been invaluable for capacity planning purposes. In-depth knowledge of all aspects of operations is available instantly to key managers throughout the company, dramatically improving storage management across the board and providing everyone in the company with greater insight into how storage resources are being used.

### About Storability®

A leading provider of storage management software, Storability is a division of StorageTek® and a vendor-neutral resource for companies seeking to measure and manage their storage like a business. Storability's Global Storage Manager (GSM) software complements StorageTek's robust information lifecycle management (ILM) offerings and allows enterprise organizations to optimize asset utilization, increase management efficiency, enhance quality of service and achieve higher availability.

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