

# British Red Cross Secures Centralised Reliable Backup and Recovery with iomart

iomart

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- Miguel Fiallos, Head of Projects (MIS) for British Red Cross



## iomart customer case study

iomart provides centralised Asigra Hybrid Cloud Backup™ and Recovery for British Red Cross

## Industry

Humanitarian organisation

## Objective

British Red Cross needed to centralise its backup and move from a tape-based system

## Solution

iomart installed Asigra Hybrid Cloud Backup™ and Recovery software

## Benefits

- Eliminated costs and time associated with tape backup
- Centralised secure backup from remote offices without bandwidth issues
- Guaranteed safe retrieval of data
- Rapid Disaster Recovery solution



Established in 1870, British Red Cross is the United Kingdom branch of the worldwide impartial humanitarian organisation the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Its mission is to help people in crisis, whoever they are and wherever they are. It is part of a global voluntary network responding to conflicts, natural disasters and individual emergencies. It also helps vulnerable people in the UK and abroad to prepare for and withstand emergencies in their own communities. When the crisis is over, British Red Cross helps those people recover and move on with their lives.



## Problematic Backup

British Red Cross has a large number of offices across the United Kingdom and many of them do not have an in-house IT team. Its previous backup infrastructure had become increasingly problematic. The backup window often ran over its allocated time frame, even using an approach that allowed for the backup of a server to multiple tape drives. This multi-threading approach using EMC Networker for backup resulted in long recovery times because the files had to be pieced together from portions of multiple tapes. There was also trouble with damaged tapes.

*“When we were using tape, non-technical members of staff had to carry out the backups manually, which left room for error and the labour-intensiveness meant that their primary job roles were being compromised.”*

Backup of remote servers was also a problem. The existing approach was to use CA ARCserve to backup the files and e-mail to tape. However with no skilled IT professionals at the remote offices, the management of the tapes lacked discipline and often resulted in problems in finding the right tape when a recovery was required.

“When we were using tape, non-technical members of staff had to carry out the backups manually, which left room for error and the labour-intensiveness meant that their primary job roles were being compromised,” explains Miguel Fiallos, Head of MIS for British Red Cross.

On top of all this, the amount of data to be protected was growing, so the problem was expected to continue and worsen.

## A new approach to backup and recovery

As part of an upgrade of the organisation's computer systems, British Red Cross decided to modernise its approach to backup and recovery. The new system would replace the tape backup approach with a disk-based solution that would send the backup to the organisation's central office. The solution needed to accommodate the various bandwidth constraints of remote office connections and support Novell NetWare/OES

and GroupWise, as well as Windows, SUSE and Red Hat Linux.

Working iomart, a set of Asigra DS-Client servers were set up in the central office to handle local and remote backup to a central DS-System Vault. Each of the three data centres and the remote offices now has a system running VMware and two virtual machines — one running Novell OES for local file and GroupWise access, and one running Windows XP to run the Asigra DS-Client software.

Miguel says iomart's implementation of Asigra Hybrid Cloud Backup™ and Recovery software has produced significant improvements. “We are expected to be able to continue running the business in the event of an emergency, which means that our IT systems need to do the same,” he says. “The fast and reliable software and service from Asigra and Backup Technology respectively have enabled us to achieve and exceed this requirement.”

The Asigra DS-Client at the remote offices is configured with local storage so that a copy of the most current backup can be kept for fast, local recovery needs. After the initial full backup is completed and transmitted, only sub file block-level changes are transmitted to the Primary DS-System Vault at the central site. This reduces traffic on the WAN. Global de-duplication and compression reduce the amount of disk space needed at the central site, with the added benefit of also reducing the cost of the Asigra license, which is priced by the amount stored at the central site.

The data on the Primary DS-System Vault is replicated to one of iomart's data centres, providing a secondary and geographically separate DS-System Vault, known more commonly as iomart's 'Hybrid Cloud Backup Solution'.

## Success Factors

iomart's implementation of Asigra's disk-based WAN-optimised architecture shatters the limitations of traditional distributed-backup software. At source de-duplication has reduced backup bandwidth requirements and reduced the amount of disk space required at the central DS-System vault site. As the DS-Client is agentless this minimises expensive licensing fees that can drive deployment costs up.

*"With Asigra's centralised software and iomart's service we can manage the backups from our head office. Backups are now carried out automatically and from a single, central location."*

The central site has taken on the responsibility of managing the process and the block-level incremental approach provides the necessary technology to support centralised backup from remote offices without bandwidth issues becoming a problem. All backups are highly secure, being disk-to-disk and with up to 256 AES encryption.

The software provides grid-based performance and capacity scaling for virtually unlimited data growth, allowing the software to support any backup load and multiple platforms and operating systems including Windows, Red Hat Linux, Novell, Netware/OES, SUSE and GroupWise, without the need to install and configure separate clients.

Miguel Fiallos, says, "With Asigra's centralised software and service we can manage the backups from our head office. Backups are now carried out automatically and from a single, central location. The SLA monitor in particular massively reduces the time it takes to investigate whether backups have passed or failed, allowing our IT staff to monitor all of our servers simultaneously. This saves us a huge amount of time compared with the old tape solution that only allowed us to restore one server at a time."

Using iomart's expertise, the Asigra system has been personalised to fit the business continuity requirements of British Red Cross. 120TBs of data is now backed up and protected.

British Red Cross has a centralised and secure backup and recovery solution. The solution ensures all data is recoverable, whether it is an entire server or just one email.

To find out more about the work of British Red Cross visit <http://www.redcross.org.uk/>