

Business Issues in the

Commercial Sector

A Solutions Guide for End Users



Data Archiving

Archives saved without significant attention to retrieval are difficult to access and manage. Intelligent archiving needs to be an integral part of any ILM implementation and should involve strategy, process, systems and infrastructure. Through linking intelligent archiving, information asset management and advanced applications strategies, organisations can realise the value in their archived data. The combination of Sun storage platforms with Sun StorageTek QFS and SAM-FS software can address these challenges with policy-based file services and continuous archiving of file data to meet service levels based on the data's life cycle, and value to your business.

Retaining knowledge

Knowledge has a habit of disappearing from an organisation along with its people. Oil and gas companies may need to refer to seismological data that is years old, manufacturers will often need to access design information for existing or even obsolete products and utilities may need to look up a detailed map of an underground pipe system. Data archiving enables such knowledge to be both retained indelibly and also indexed, so that it can be found and cross-referenced quickly. Indexing is one of the key differences between true data archiving and simple data backup.

Improving performance

Companies that put off archiving data risk impeding their overall system performance, and this can have significant ramifications for their business. As large volumes of data accumulate in operational systems, all the data must be archived to reduce the processing overhead. Utilities will find this with billing system data, for example, which accumulates rapidly on a monthly basis. Retailers will also find that sales data becomes overwhelming and slows down transactional systems unless they archive the older data to make way for the new.

Auditability and risk reduction

Risk reduction is a goal equally important to all commercial companies, and archiving data is an important element in reducing legal risks. This applies to many different types of information, including product and transaction data. For example, a food manufacturer may need to archive information about ingredients and supply chain data for a particular food product should litigation arise from a consumer of that product in the future. The importance of data archiving extends to communications media such as email, which should be stored so that in the event of a legal claim, an audit trail can be reconstructed. A commercial company being sued for sexual discrimination, for example, would not be able to build a clear legal case without a record of the emails sent between the parties involved.

Data Consolidation

In the face of expanding data requirements and shrinking budgets, effective utilisation of storage and data has become. Sun can deliver a complete storage solution for consolidation by providing an end-to-end IT infrastructure, from the operating system to server and storage systems, through applications and management tools, to service and support. This paves the way for the lowest possible total cost of ownership. Storage tailored to the Sun server platform offers easier implementation, higher performance, and greater reliability. Sun storage can also play a key role in consolidating existing infrastructures starting at the workgroup level through Switchless SAN™ technology.

Business flexibility

Many organisations face increasing challenges from competitors, especially in markets that have recently been deregulated. New services and products are often a vital tool to match these competitors, and yet companies will find it difficult to deliver them if their data is in disarray. Consolidating data makes it possible for retailers and logistics firms to develop new customer-facing services such as e-commerce. For manufacturers and oil companies both upstream and downstream, unifying data structures and consolidating storage using a storage area network makes data more accessible. This leads to faster business decisions and moves companies closer towards just-in-time manufacturing and delivery.

Customer responsiveness

For customer-facing businesses such as retail, transport, or logistics, a consolidated data architecture brings all of the necessary data to operators much more quickly when needed. A customer waiting on the phone for a call centre operator to pull up their records will quickly lose interest, and if those records are missing key transactions with another business division, the operator will miss the opportunity to cross-sell services and products. Customers will have a closer relationship with a retail business or logistics operator that has access to all of their transaction data and history.

Strategic focus

For today's commercial companies, using IT as a strategic resource rather than an operational one is imperative for the future of the business. Retailers, manufacturers, and logistics firms should be thinking about how IT can enhance their business in five years time. For this to happen, operational resources such as storage must be easy to manage and maintain. Managing disparate storage devices spread across multiple networks will consume valuable time and money, as will maintaining different data architectures for legacy applications. Consolidating everything into a utility storage environment enables management to be automated.

Data Protection

In the Participation Age your business data is your most valuable strategic asset. Sun's portfolio of data protection solutions allows you to protect information for thousands of networked servers and workstations. By standardising on the Sun modular storage family, incorporating enterprise data protection services, you can protect your largest data centres and smallest branch offices, while minimising costs, reducing management overhead, and increasing return on your storage investments. Of course, one size rarely fits all, but you can be sure of finding a flexible solution with scalable backup and recovery capabilities for your storage infrastructure within Sun's data protection portfolio.

Regulatory compliance

Apart from the Data Protection Act 1998, which requires all companies to protect personal data, there are other regulatory issues. The Sarbanes-Oxley Act, signed into US law in 2002, holds company directors personally liable in the event of inadequate controls. Moreover, companies wishing to list themselves on the London Stock Exchange must show how they have applied the Combined Code on Corporate Governance, which requires a sound system of internal control that is reviewed annually. The Financial Reporting Council notes that even though unlisted companies are not obliged to follow these rules, many have agreed to do it voluntarily. Data protection is simply good business practice.

Brand protection

Any commercial company, especially those engaged in business-to-consumer transactions such as retail, transport and logistics, are protecting more than their customers' information when they implement data protection procedures. They are also protecting their brand. Retailers have been known to lose customer credit card details by the thousands to hackers, which can make customers very wary of dealing with them again. Good data protection can contribute to goodwill on the balance sheet, and should not be overlooked by any company that wants to be held trustworthy and competent by its customers and business partners.

Business to business integration

Commercial organisations are encouraged to integrate at an operational level with business partners. Retailers, transport companies and manufacturers cannot build effective supply chain integration without systems integration for the exchange of product and delivery data, and failing to do so will cost them competitive advantage. But business partners will only be prepared to open up systems to those outside the boundaries of their business if they are sure that partners' data is adequately protected.

ILM

Without ready access to relevant, secure data, you are exposed to risk and left to make key decisions in a vacuum. Around 90% of data is seldom or never accessed after 90 days and an estimated 80% of data can safely be stored on lower-cost storage. Sun's storage solutions can help even the smallest of enterprises start to establish the foundations for Information Lifecycle Management (ILM). From creating simple tiered storage architectures using Sun's comprehensive range of Workgroup level disk and tape solutions, through to Information Management Maturity Model (IM3) diagnostic tools, these solutions help you turn your data into a usable business asset.

Strengthening logistics

Logistics affects companies in most sectors, including manufacturing, retail, utilities, and of course, transport. It also relies heavily on the ready accessibility of data pertaining to a particular transaction. As companies continue to drive efficiencies into their logistical operations, they cannot afford to have data taken offline or inadvertently destroyed. Even relegating data to slower media can have severe implications for the logistical process if it is still needed by the business. ILM can help companies to retain the data needed when, for example, a truck driver with a limited drop window approaches a warehouse with a load that must be redirected.

Maintaining security

Managing the flow of data throughout the company from creation to deletion is an important step in guaranteeing its security. Internal networks are rife with data that has been orphaned, left in a directory and forgotten. The fact that many such networks are made available via intranets should concern security professionals within commercial organisations, many of whom will be subject to Sarbanes-Oxley controls. ILM can help to mitigate this problem by automatically governing data using a matrix of business rules, ensuring that it is deleted at the appropriate time and not discarded for others to find.

Harmonising business and IT

Companies in the commercial sector are witnessing a fundamental change in the relationship between business managers and IT departments. As they begin to realise the importance of IT as a strategic tool, they must overcome inherent tensions between the two domains. In particular, business managers want as much information available as possible at all times, whereas IT departments driven by security and complexity concerns want to limit the amount of extraneous information floating unstructured around the organisation. ILM can help to find a balance between the two, tying the availability of information to its business relevance.

Why choose Sun StorageTek products?

Sun Microsystems is a recognised multi-billion dollar industry leader in the UNIX and open systems storage market. Its innovative storage solutions help simplify IT environments so organisations of all sizes can increase efficiency and utilisation, lower costs, improve reliability and compete more effectively.

Deliver Better Value,
Access, Simplicity, and Trust

What does Sun offer to your business?

- End-to-end offering of storage hardware, software and services
- Open systems approach, support for heterogeneous environments
- Best-of-breed devices across every storage class
- Unique systems approach
- Proven storage expertise

- Innovative products, technologies and methodologies
- Sun protects more data than any other Vendor
- Leaders in Virtualisation, Identity Management, Integration, Security and ILM

Get 50% Off your next Storage Healthcheck!

Can your current infrastructure meet your existing and future storage demands?

Are you maximising the availability of your storage environment?

Do you know what specific actions are needed to resolve your current infrastructure issues?
0800 022 0170

If you cannot answer the above questions with a definite YES then your Sun Microsystems Partner can help with the solution. Request your Data Storage Assessment Service today.

The Data Storage Assessment Service includes:

- Two day on site visit
- On site audit of Sun Storage infrastructure
- Formal report to detail all findings of the assessment
- Optional follow up meeting to review the report (where appropriate)
- Assessment of up to a maximum of 10TB of Sun data storage, split across a maximum of three Sun arrays, and a maximum of 10 host connections.
- 50% savings on list price offer
- Offer code: IS-STO-HCK-001
- Offer lasts until May 29th 2007

For storage infrastructures comprised of non-Sun storage arrays, request alternative Data Storage Assessment Service quotation from your Sun Microsystems Partner

Address your Business Issues today and request your Data Storage Assessment from your Sun Microsystems Partner.

Your Sun Microsystems Partner

Call 0800 963 941 to find your nearest Sun Microsystems Partner



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