



Customer Success Story

"F5 Acopia reduced the size of our backups by 98%, which lowered our media costs by 90%. Instead of taking 36 hours and using 40 tapes, backups now take just 50 minutes and require only 4 tapes."

—James Sample,
Director of IT Infrastructure

Highlights

Industry

- Publishing

Challenges

- Large volumes of unstructured data resulted in unacceptably long backups
- Backup process consumed almost the entire window, limiting IT's ability to restart if a failure occurred
- Storage costs were increasing to accommodate data growth

Solution

- Clustered F5 Acopia ARX500 devices
- Age-based policies automatically move files to appropriate storage tiers without impacting user access

Benefits

- Reduced backup window by 97%
- Reduced media costs by 90% each week
- Eliminated the need to acquire new storage capacity
- Improved recovery capabilities to ensure business continuity
- Improved backup success rates

John Wiley & Sons Optimizes Backup, Effectively Manages Rapid Data Growth with F5 Acopia

For 200 years, John Wiley & Sons, Inc. has been a valued source of information and understanding for people around the world. The company is a leading publisher for the scientific, technical, and medical communities, produces both electronic and print versions of books and subscription products, and publishes a wide array of educational materials. Its many well-known products include the For Dummies® reference series, Frommer's® travel guides, Betty Crocker® cookbooks and Webster New World® dictionary series.

The Challenges

Burgeoning Backup Windows and Growing Media Costs

Wiley's rapidly growing repository of book content is managed by the Indianapolis data center. This content translates into approximately 25 terabytes (TB) of unstructured data, which is stored on Windows®-based servers. The task of backing up this much data each week had become increasingly difficult and costly. Backing up just one 10TB server required 36 hours and consumed 40 tapes. In addition, performing a 36-hour backup within a 48-hour window left no time to resume the job in the event of a failure.

"Because book content is all unstructured data, we didn't have any of the efficiencies that you get when backing up database files," explained James Sample, Director of IT Infrastructure. "We had to do backup the slow hard way."

The company's business success was resulting in 100% data growth each year, exacerbating the backup problem for the IT department. Rather than undergo a major infrastructure change, the IT organization knew huge improvements in backup speed and storage expenses could be realized if they could identify only those files that had been modified over the course of the week, rather than perform a full backup each week.

The Solution

Intelligent File Virtualization with F5 Acopia

Wiley installed a highly available pair of F5 Acopia ARX500 devices into its Windows server environment and established a tiering policy based on file modification dates. Only files that have been modified within the past month are included in the weekly backup. Files that have not been modified within this timeframe have not changed, and therefore do not need to be backed up again. These files are then automatically moved to a new location on the file server where they remain instantly accessible to users, but are being backed up just once a month rather than every week.

"We don't need to backup every file, every Friday, if that file hasn't been modified. But, the minute a file is changed, it automatically is moved back to its original location and gets backed up that night," Sample said.

Sample is also using the F5 Acopia device's other capabilities to attain further operational efficiencies. For instance, the device enables the IT team to generate reports for end-users which highlight files that have not been accessed in two years. Users are given the option of deleting those files, or having them moved to an optical storage for long-term preservation.





Next, Wiley plans to leverage its investment in the ARX500 even further by using the device to bolster its disaster recovery capabilities.

“Our primary Windows-based server manages everything at this data center, so if the servers go down, the business grinds to a halt,” Sample said. “Using the ARX, we can make a volume shadow copy, move it to a cold spare and within 20 minutes everyone is up and running again. Then, we can take a couple of days to fix the problem if we need to, and I haven’t spent any money on it.”

The Results

Dramatically Reduced Backup Windows and Media Costs

Since deploying the F5 Acopia solution, Wiley has seen the size of its regular backups shrink to less than 5% of its former size, causing backup times to plummet by 97% to just 50 minutes. Tape consumption has gone from 40 tapes per backup to just 4 tapes, resulting in measurable, out-of-pocket savings. Sample expects to see further reductions as the tiering strategy is expanded to identify files that have been inactive for long periods of time.

The F5 Acopia implementation also improved Wiley’s backup success rate. Unlike a 36-hour job, a 50-minute backup process can be easily restarted in event of a failure, ensuring all data is safely copied.

Using the Acopia intelligent file virtualization solution has helped Wiley:

- Reduce media costs by 90% each week;
- Eliminate the need to purchase new storage capacity by implementing automated storage tiering policies that enable older data to be moved to long-term storage;
- Implement an efficient disaster recovery process that ensures business continuity;
- Improve backup success rates by reducing the backup window.

Summary

Improved File Management and Disaster Recovery while Still Reducing Storage Costs

Automated storage tiering with F5 Acopia has enabled Wiley to efficiently manage its constantly expanding volumes of unstructured data without incurring major infrastructure changes. At the same time, the company has been able to significantly reduce the cost of storage and is using the Acopia device to improve operations in other areas as well, including disaster recovery.

“The Acopia ARX easily paid for itself just in tapes saved. We get a lot more bang for the buck by using the ARX to identify data that can be moved off of the server, which saves me from buying more storage.”

-James Sample, Director of IT Infrastructure



F5 Networks, Inc.

41 Wellman Street
Lowell, MA 01851
(978) 513-2900 Voice
(978) 513-2990 Fax
www.f5.com
info@f5.com

F5 Networks Asia-Pacific

+65-6533-6103 Voice
+65-6533-6106 Fax
info.asia@f5.com

F5 Networks Ltd. Europe/Middle-East/Africa

+44 (0) 1932 582 000 Voice
+44 (0) 1932 582 001 Fax
emeainfo@f5.com

F5 Networks Japan K.K.

+81-3-5114-3200 Voice
+81-3-5114-3201 Fax
info@f5networks.co.jp