



## Software Review: Symantec Backup Exec 2010

*This review was conducted by Jason Attard.*

For the love of all that's holy, why would a sane person spend money on backup software, when servers already come with a raid setup? Or yet still, when today's OS's come packed with their own backing software? These were the main questions in my head when Newtech presented us with Symantec's 'Backup Exec 2010'. The aim of this review is to understand why third party back up software is needed, and how valid Symantec's product is as a back-up solution.

It turns out that none other than Microsoft had originally contracted Veritas in the 1990s to provide storage management software for the Windows NT operating system, and this was eventually named 'Windows NT Backup'. Veritas went on to beef up the backup software concept under their own steam, and were good enough to be noted, and acquired, by Symantec. The software under review has thus very strong origins.

When Veritas developed the concept of their backup software, they expanded it so that it would not just cater for Microsoft operating systems. It also works with Linux, and recognises data manufactured by Sequel and Oracle as well as Microsoft's own. The company signed agreements with leading Unix companies, including Hewlett-Packard, Sequent, Tandem, Digital Equipment Corp., IBM, Oracle and Sun Microsystems. Under these agreements, Veritas would license its system recovery software to the OEMs while protecting its source code.

### **BUT ISN'T SYMANTEC AN ANTIVIRUS VENDOR?**

Symantec entered the storage market five years ago with its

US\$13.5 billion acquisition of Veritas. And although Symantec and Veritas operated in different product categories, data security and data availability are two adjacent pieces of a large puzzle. Veritas was a software company that focused on the development of storage management. Prior to the merger both Symantec and Veritas ran the risk of not being able to effectively compete with IBM, Computer Associates and Microsoft, all of which had or were investing in storage and security offerings in their arsenals. This joining thus made a lot of sense for both the anti-virus and backup software products.

### **REVIEWING THE SOFTWARE**

We installed the BE12 media server on a Supermicro Igloo 100LP server running Windows Server 2003 R2, and we also deployed remote agents to basic workstations.

Installation proved to be remarkably simple. It auto-installed with hardly any input from the installer. Advanced settings are available for those network administrators who like to tweak their stuff. An optional environment check scans the computer to make sure that it meets the minimum hardware and software requirements. The base product and multiple components can be selected at this point. And adding on to your needs later on is always possible through the easy-to-understand interface.

Backup jobs are easy enough to create and typically consist of a four-tier process within which the source data and backup device are chosen, the backup method is selected, and the job scheduled. And we could access our Exchange data as well as basic folders at ease.

Once a backup location has been defined, you can use snapshots to provide file versioning. These are point-in-time backups that are also maintained on the CPS server and allow previous file versions to be kept for restoration. How many you retain is up to you, as you can set the interval between snapshots and create a retention policy for older snapshots.

Backup jobs are straightforward to create, as you pick which business servers you want to include, select drives, folders and files, and then choose a schedule. You can opt for backups to run continuously so any file changes are immediately secured, or the job can be run at regular intervals. Usefully, each job may be restricted to using a percentage of available network bandwidth. Once the job is ready, it starts immediately and then synchronises the vault with the selected locations of the business' servers. From here on, whenever a file has been modified, only the changed blocks, are sent to the backup server.

### INTERFACE

Always viewed as a strongpoint, the interface employed by Symantec Backup Exec 2010 has been tweaked somewhat. Those familiar with the software will feel at home and enjoy the new frills in the UI, and new users will find the software easy to get the hang of. Basic wizardry is also available to facilitate making use of the software.

### GRANULAR RECOVERY TECHNOLOGY

One of the strong points of Backup Exec 12, this technology allows the administrator to restore "active users" through a few simple mouse clicks. The patented Granular Recovery technology also allows easy data recovery of Microsoft products such as Exchange. It also reduces the amount of resources and server time for backups and supports a variety of backup media including Disk and Tape.

### HOW IT WORKS

Simply create a recovery point, and open it when wanted. Pick up those documents or mails that you wish to have recovered.

### CPS SLOTS NEATLY IN WITH BACKUP EXEC.

On the test system, the selection screen for new backup jobs had an extra entry for the CPS server, where we could select the entire vault or certain folders and also choose from the list of completed snapshots. Files can be restored directly from the CPS administrative console, while users can point their web browser at the CPS server and browse files lists and restore files according to their logon credentials.

Backup Exec Agents and Options are there to help you protect critical Microsoft applications or non-Microsoft Operating systems, Backup Exec 2010 comes with an expansive portfolio of Agents and Options to scale and grow a backup environment.

### SPECIAL FEATURES

Data deduplication is also known as "Intelligent Compression" and reduces backup processes by eliminating redundant data. Only one unique instance of the data is actually retained on the backup media, and redundant data is replaced with a pointer to the actual data. The reviewed product makes use of this technology.



Another capability in this release is the ability to work with a wide range of virtualization technologies. Backup Exec 2010 now integrates optional deduplication technology and adds support for multiple virtualization technologies as well as complete virtual machine protection. Administrators can use Backup Exec System Recovery to backup virtual environments and to juggle backups between the physical and virtual realms using a wizard-driven interface.

This facility moreover enables him/her to convert a recovery point into a virtualised format, thus allowing the testing of recovery points, or the implementation of software upgrades, prior to actual system implementation.

### CONCLUSION

Symantec Backup Exec 2010 delivers reliable backup and recovery designed for your growing business. The software can help you protect more data while you reduce storage and management costs and improve your overall backup performance through integrated deduplication and archiving technology.



Symantec Backup Exec 2010 can help reduce business downtime with technology designed to recover critical Microsoft applications like Exchange, SQL, SharePoint and Active Directory environments along with VMware or Microsoft Hyper-V virtual environments.

Backup Exec also delivers centralised management to manage both Windows and non-Windows systems through a single console.

It seems to me that Symantec's Backup Exec 2010 is not quite re-inventing the wheel. But it does seem to beat everyone at their own game. RAID replicates your data but unless copious amounts of money are thrown at implementing and maintaining a complex hardware RAID system, it will not allow the re-integration of pure data over corrupt data. Generic back-up software such as that created by Symantec's Verisign on behalf of Microsoft does give snapshots, but only provide basic facilities, poor scheduling, and so forth. And the little competition that Symantec Backup Exec 12 has seems to employ interfaces which hinder the administrator's operation of the software, who thus typically resorts to just re-integrating the whole damn thing.

Overall, Backup Exec 2010 is designed to readily optimise any Windows data protection strategy, saving your time, money and Data.

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