



Electric Insurance Replaces Complexity with Simplicity

“Always On” NAS Backup Eliminates Costs and Enables Instant Recovery

Summary

Electric Insurance is a large personal insurance company with significant IT assets that, in service to customers, must be “Always On.” They were having significant issues with the speed, scale, cost, and complexity of their backup solution for unstructured data. Implementing Actifio’s Big Data Director (BDD), combined with the power of the Virtual Data Pipeline (VDP), Electric Insurance found the cost effective, scalable and easy-to-use unstructured data protection solution they were looking for.

“Our aging backup infrastructure involved a half dozen different tools. We needed a new approach and wanted something beyond updated versions of legacy systems. First, we used Actifio to solve our backup problems and were able to retire multiple point solutions. But once we had Actifio running we discovered all sorts of new uses we could put it to.”



Key Facts

WHO: Electric Insurance

CHALLENGES: Backup complexity, capacity, reliability, performance and cost

IT ENVIRONMENT: Salesforce, SQL, VMware, EMC Isilon NAS, IBM TSM backup, Mainframe using EMC VTL/MDL

SOLUTION: Installed Actifio BDD and CDS for backup and DR. Includes Isilon API integration, instant recovery, dedup, and DR

BENEFITS: Reliable Disaster Recovery, Simple Backup, Easy Data Migration, Reduced Cost

Organization Overview

Electric Insurance Company specializes in personal car, home, and umbrella insurance coverage. Initially established to serve General Electric employees, they now offer insurance products to the general public across the US and Canada with \$450 million in annual written premiums. Electric Insurance was one of the first insurance companies to offer web-based insurance quotes in the 1990s. Their commitment to an “Always On” customer focus includes IT systems that support every business element from fast quotes to rapid claims settlement and comprehensive online services.

The Challenge

Effectively protecting their large unstructured data environment with a proxy based IBM TSM solution backing up their EMC Isilon storage had become a painful challenge for Electric Insurance. With ~20M documents and media files spread over ~3M directories, their existing solution didn’t scale. Lengthy file scans forced an increase in snapshots and weekly backups to a separate dedupe device. Daily tapes were being shipped offsite and, combined with complex workarounds, created time-consuming three-day recovery times and a 24-hour recovery point—at best. Although they had a strong desire to create a reliable DR site, the convoluted backup process prevented a workable remote replication solution.

What Electric Insurance needed was a cost effective, scalable, and easy-to-use data protection solution for their unstructured data.

The Solution

Searching for a workable solution, Electric Insurance considered refreshing their IBM TSM. They also looked at Commvault and Networker, but none of these approaches would fully resolve their problems. And some would only add complications, particularly in long transition processes. Actifio offered an elegant and comprehensive solution.

“We cut recovery points and times from three days to hours. No more tape! We’re able to recover corrupted business intelligence databases in minutes where it once took hours.”

– BILL CROTEAU, INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES DIRECTOR
AT ELECTRIC INSURANCE

“We used Actifio to do destructive testing during a SQL upgrade. It greatly accelerated the conversion process, saving us time, money and aggravation. The Actifio system of virtualized data requires so much less time than our previous methods, it’s a quantum leap ahead.”

– BILL CROTEAU, INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES DIRECTOR
AT ELECTRIC INSURANCE

The differentiators were clear:

Cost efficiency: Actifio’s BDD solution helped achieve important cost efficiencies by eliminating three hardware platforms and five software licenses. That included decommissioning TSM, a Dedup appliance, a WAN Optimization solution, and avoided the purchase of another Isilon storage array.

Isilon API integration and simplicity: BDD integrates with the Isilon API to efficiently gather the changed files list with no more scanning of file systems.

Instant recovery: BDD extends the power of Virtual Data Pipeline to unstructured data. It maintains the benefits of VDP, including the single Golden Copy with incremental forever updates and instant mount—a unique Actifio differentiator that no other solution offers.

Replication and DAR: Because BDD leverages the remote capabilities of the underlying CDS; Electric Insurance could selectively DAR a subset of their data and remote replicate the remaining. The bandwidth efficient replication transfers only changed blocks to the target site.

Ease of Use: Moving beyond the initial unstructured data implementation, Electric Insurance has now deployed Actifio for their SQL and VMware infrastructures while BDD maintains ease of use. Once the datasets are created, BDD enables management of unstructured data just as it does other applications. No additional training required.

“This has been disruptive in a good way. It’s a whole new way of thinking for us.”

– BILL CROTEAU, INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES DIRECTOR
AT ELECTRIC INSURANCE

In a single integrated platform, Electric Insurance now has the scale, backup and recovery functionality, offsite Disaster Recovery capabilities and bandwidth efficiency they had been looking for. Costs are lower and complexity is greatly reduced.

Immediate Benefits

Backup

Electric Insurance enjoys new backup simplicity, reliability and speed. All data has been successfully ingested, deduped and replicated. Incremental backups are successfully running and the customer has successfully tested the recovery use cases.

Disaster Recovery and Failover Testing

Combined with remote datacenter resources, Electric Insurance has used Actifio to create a robust and reliable set of DR capabilities. They have fine-tuned SLAs for selective backup replication with reduced bandwidth and instant access to critical data on the remote site - another unique capability that BDD brings to market.

Data Migration and More

Electric Insurance continues to find additional uses for Actifio. They are now using it to perform data migrations during their SQL server upgrade and are developing plans for Actifio use in application test and development.