NeoPlanet Case Study

With its Linux and Macintosh operating systems and its storage/backup requirements doubling every 6 months, NeoPlanet had very specific criteria for its backup/storage solution.   Not only did the solution have to be compatible with two operating systems but as a start-up, NeoPlanet wanted the solution to be the most cost-effective per megabyte of data, with storage media that was affordable and reusable.

NeoPlanet is the creator of the NeoPlanet "Internet Desktop," a unique software application that combines popular Internet features such as Web browsing, email, instant messaging and search into a single application that is more user-friendly and customizable than standard browser or online service software.

NeoPlanet unites content, community, and communications, by integrating a web browser, e-mail client, instant messaging, chat, web directory, search engine, and user created communities all into a single application. NeoPlanet not only offers software for users to create their own Internet desktop, but it also customizes web browsers for businesses that wants to create both identity and ease of use for the corporate browser environment. Media and technology leaders such Lycos, New Line Cinema, McAfee.com, IBM, NEC and others distribute NeoPlanet under private labels.

NeoPlanet gives users the ability to control their online environment by customizing a built-in Web directory through NeoPlanet Channels; forming communities with NeoPlanet's NetClubs; and expressing their sense of "Internet Fashion" with NeoPlanet's skins. For the consumer, NeoPlanet offers another alternative to the two big browsers. Now with built-in messaging and communities, as part of the Lycos deal, as well as the ability to change the "skin" of the browser — giving it one of hundreds of downloadable looks and feels — NeoPlanet offers features the other browsers lack -- and finds its storage needs are growing rapidly.

In making the storage migration from a Hewlett Packard DAT system, NeoPlanet looked to Sony's Advanced Intelligent tape and tape drive solutions. NeoPlanet's AIT solution is divided among two segments of the network.

The Linux network is backed up by one Sony APS AIT PLUS Autoloader, which uses 4 35/70GB Sony AIT tapes in a cartridge.   Now the backup capacity is 140GB/280GB compressed in one easy step. The Sony APS AIT PLUS 35G/70G external scsi drives are dedicated to individual database servers.

NeoPlanet uses Sony SDX1-35C AIT tapes exclusively, while Arkeia backup/archiving software runs on a RedHat Linux 6.1 Server. Arkeia recently won the Linux World Editor's Choice Award for the Best File Storage/Recovery product.

NeoPlanet's Macintosh network is backed up by one Sony APS AIT PLUS autoloader, using Sony media exclusively. The backup software is Retrospect Server Backup® from Danz Development Corporation, providing backup software for Windows® and Macintosh® computers.

Approximately 50 to 200 gigabytes of data can be backed up on any given day, said Gary Nichols, NeoPlanet's network operations manager. Much of the data is mission critical such as NeoPlanet's financials and accounting. In addition, Nichols explained, NeoPlanet also backs up large, graphics- intensive browsers that are being customized for customers. These customized browsers, Nichols observed, can be approximately 3 megabytes in size.

Sony APS AIT is fast, reliable and "the best bang for the buck," according to Nichols. "The easy SCSI-device number configuration on the back of the drive is great. It beats flipping dip switches any day."

Nichols defines fast as "very fast. . . we can back up tens of gigabytes in a few hours." And the Sony drive meets the highest standard of reliability: "The drive has never failed. Period. The durability of the tapes and drive itself is outstanding. It stands up to whatever I throw at it. I haven't found one defective tape in 9 months."

And for a company whose backup needs have been doubling, the ability to add capacity by using the Sony AIT autoloader and compression capabilities cannot be overlooked.

Since there are always too few hands and more work than hands at young companies, Nichols appreciates the peace of mind he has experienced as a result of the AIT solution and recommends it for mid-sized LANs requiring fast, reliable backup.

"The Sony drive combined with Arkeia and Retrospect backup software is so reliable that I simply need to change my tapes daily and read through the backup logs. That's it. Very easy. It has given me more time to concentrate on my other work."

His only other desire for his AIT drive: "I wish it came in other colors."