Dennis Publishing keeps pages turning across the globe thanks to StorageCraft data protection solutions

ShadowXafe   OneXafe   OneXafe Solo

COMPANY
Dennis Publishing

COUNTRY
UK

INDUSTRY
Media

EMPLOYEES
650

STORAGECRAFT SOLUTIONS
ShadowXafe, 2 OneXafe 4417, OneXafe Solo

About Dennis Publishing

Dennis Publishing is one of the biggest and most dynamic media companies in the world. Founded in 1973, the publisher specialises in four key areas: Technology, Current Affairs, Automotive and Lifestyle, reaching over 50 million unique users and selling over 2.5million magazines every month. With offices in both the UK and US, Dennis is the sixth largest consumer magazine publisher globally and has an annual group turnover of over £130m.

With multiple sites to manage and protect, and expansion expected in the future, Dennis Publishing required a highly scalable, site-agnostic backup, recovery and storage solution that would be easy for the in-house IT team to manage remotely. Following a thorough review of the market, it chose to deploy a suite of StorageCraft data protection solutions to ensure business continuity across its international sites.

The Challenge

In 2018, Dennis was acquired by private equity firm, Exponent. Soon after the acquisition, two offices were added to the business, one in New York and the other in Washington DC. The IT strategy was then evolved to standardise and integrate infrastructure across the UK and USA. As part of this evolution, the Dennis IT team looked to move away from the existing site-specific data backup and recovery solution and source a solution capable of spanning across their multiple locations and be managed centrally via the cloud.

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>
> - Shoaib Laher, Head of IT for Dennis Publishing

The international business need was clearly aligned. All locations required a reliable, scalable and site-agnostic solution; critical servers needed to be backed up and quickly available to mitigate disruption should the worst occur.

Dennis' previous backup solution was aging and could only be managed locally from the UK office - simply put, it was not fit for purpose and was leaving the business vulnerable. Dennis owns more than 30 media brands - each including digital and print format publications and content - so data loss could be catastrophic. This is not to mention the potential reputational damage that could occur for the Group among its target readers and advertisers, in the event of a failure.

"The confidence and probability in recovering data with the previous solution was very low. Our confidence in recovering from a ransomware attack was low and if indeed we were able to do so, the time taken to return to production would have been days or even weeks", explains Shoaib Laher, Head of IT for Dennis Publishing.

The need for a robust, scalable and truly international solution was urgent.

The Solution

With key criteria identified, the Dennis IT team went to market and assessed solutions from Veeam, Barracuda and StorageCraft against factors such as ease of use, scalability and level of cloud management.

"We landed on StorageCraft because it ticked all our boxes and gave us brilliant value for money, which made our CFO very happy! For businesses in our space, the level of scalability that it offers works really well, and the solutions have the added benefit of not requiring a lot of time-consuming management. For IT directors or CIOs looking for top class, cost-effective backup, it really is a no brainer", said Shoaib.

A watertight backup process and storage is used to ensure business continuity and strengthen the publisher's overall data resilience. Dennis is using StorageCraft ShadowXafe for backup and recovery in London and New York, and OneXafe 4417 object based NAS storage as a backup target in both locations, with bi-directional data replication. OneXafe Solo has recently been deployed in Washington DC to protect four servers; its backup data is replicating to the OneXafe appliance in New York, that has been set up as the worldwide failover site.

When it comes to management, StorageCraft OneSystem is used by the IT team to oversee the entire infrastructure in real-time from a single, unified platform. Across all three sites, Dennis has eight physical hosts and around 65 Virtual Machines (VMs) dealing with almost 200 Terabytes of data in total.

While physically the sites are located in different geographies, they are all connected on the same logical network using Meraki's cloud networking solution. As a result, if a site is lost, employees are able to seamlessly reconnect and access their data, irrespective of their location. Dennis' IT team runs quarterly maintenance tests to ensure everything is working as it should.

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The Result

For Dennis, the deployment of StorageCraft has been a resounding success. Part of this has been due to the excellent service that the Dennis team has received from the StorageCraft team.

Speaking of this, Shoaib said: "Put simply, the StorageCraft support team is genius. They know our deployment inside out, meaning that any issues are dealt with swiftly and without a timely escalation chain. As a big, international company, we deal with a lot of industry leading vendors, and the service we receive from StorageCraft is up there with the very best of them".

If Dennis expands its business into new markets or through further acquisitions, the group's IT team feels safe in the knowledge that with StorageCraft, scaling the existing infrastructure will be easy. Perhaps most importantly, deploying the suite of solutions has provided invaluable peace of mind for Laher and the rest of the IT team when it comes to ransomware protection: "Thanks to StorageCraft, we are far more prepared to recover from a ransomware attack. It is such a relief knowing that we aren't as vulnerable as we used to be. Any one of our IT team can go to the Board and say with confidence that our data is fully backed up, protected and quickly recoverable", said Shoaib.

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