



SUCCESS STORIES

PHOENIX ASSURANCE COMPANY LEVERAGES NETAPP STORAGE TO ENSURE RECOVERY WITHIN 48 HOURS OF A SITE FAILURE

“Deploying NetApp storage at our central and disaster recovery sites provided immediate cost savings of hundreds of thousands of dollars. We expect it to save us considerably more in the long term.”

RONEN GEULI Storage Manager, Phoenix IT Division



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Location Givatayim, Israel

Industry Insurance

The Challenge

- Ensure rapid, uninterrupted access
- Streamline 15- to 20-hour backups
- Tape recoveries take hours/days
- Site failure = one-week shutdown
- Remote DR prohibitively expensive

The Solution

- NetApp FAS systems
- NetApp NearStore® system
- NetApp NetCache® systems
- NetApp SnapMirror® software
- NetApp SnapRestore® software
- NetApp SnapManager® software
- NetApp DataFabric® Manager software

Benefits

- Robust disaster recovery plan
- Multiple data recovery points
- Database backup time cut 90%
- Database recovery 3 min, not 5 hr
- 48 hr disaster recoverability
- 100s of \$1000s saved

THE CUSTOMER

The Israel Phoenix Assurance Company Ltd. (www.phoenix.co.il) specializes in general, life, health, and nursing insurance and is part of the Israel Phoenix Group, the third-largest insurance group in Israel. Headquartered near Tel Aviv, the company maintains dozens of offices across Israel. These offices serve as claim centers, regional offices, and subsidiaries, linking a workforce of more than 1,000 employees and 5,000 independent agents, brokers, and other external users. As one of the most technologically advanced companies in Israel, Phoenix melds experience with robust business information tools to efficiently service insurance claims and to effectively manage customer risk for service longevity.

THE CHALLENGE:

Upgrade Aging Storage Infrastructure to Improve Efficiency and Support a Remote Disaster Recovery Plan

Success in the insurance business depends upon having and using the best information. For Phoenix, that means safely storing, managing, and strategically applying tens of terabytes of data. Ronen Geuli, manager of data storage, backup, and survivability activities at Phoenix, says that fixing an overloaded communications network was just one challenge facing the company in its quest to upgrade to a world-class storage solution. “The process of backing up just the documents stored

in our electronic imaging system started at 5:00 p.m. every day and ended at 8:00 a.m. the next. Backing up the entire site could take 20 hours. Such data volume accelerated the wear on our backup robots and created a huge load on the communications network.”

The events of 9/11 dramatically underscored the company’s need for a more efficient data storage and protection solution. Geuli explains, “In the event of a catastrophe we faced a shutdown of at least one week while we restored from tape—that’s absolutely unacceptable and could result in enormous financial damage. Every day of shutdown amounts to around a million dollars in damages. Our goal was to build a disaster recovery infrastructure that would enable complete operational recoverability within 48 hours.”

Phoenix considered expanding an existing IBM Shark storage system and deploying a second Shark system at a new disaster recovery site, but Geuli’s evaluation team concluded that option was prohibitively expensive and would leave critical information at risk. The financial costs associated with the required IBM hardware and point-to-point remote copy software were simply too high, and the Israeli communications infrastructure could not meet the minimal transfer rates required to mirror all required data between the two sites.

“We depend on NetApp storage to host some 100TB of business-essential data. NetApp technology reduced database backup times by 90%, helping us achieve 48-hour disaster recoverability and business continuity.”

RONEN GEULI Storage Manager, Phoenix IT Division

THE SOLUTION:
Network Appliance Storage and Content Delivery Solutions

The unique capabilities of NetApp Snapshot™ technology led Phoenix to consider a NetApp storage solution. Geuli explains, “NetApp allows us to create multiple Snapshot copies of our storage system at very short intervals, with the ability to return quickly to any number of earlier versions. And the reliability of the NetApp systems is excellent. We tested one NetApp system prior to choosing the NetApp solution. It worked perfectly and showed tremendous survivability. In fact, we couldn’t make the system crash.”

Today, most of Phoenix’s central storage system and its entire disaster recovery site rely on Network Appliance storage systems. Collectively, NetApp storage systems host more than 100TB of data, including home directories, research data based on SQL Server™, a business data warehouse, imaging system documents (including customer letters and so on), dozens of production Oracle® Databases, and Exchange 2000 stores. Business applications originally configured to write to the Shark system now write simultaneously to the Shark and a NetApp system that serves as a failover for the Shark device. NetApp SnapMirror software replicates data locally at the main site and to a NetApp system at a remote disaster recovery facility.

Phoenix has leveraged its highly scalable and flexible NetApp infrastructure to address a variety of evolving business requirements. NetApp NearStore systems provide cost-effective near-line storage for inexpensive data archiving, for example. The company also minimizes ISP bandwidth requirements using the NetApp Internet access and security solution, based on NetApp NetCache appliances. NetApp DataFabric Manager enables a business-centric view of the company’s entire storage and content delivery landscape.

BUSINESS BENEFITS:
Robust DR Capabilities, Rapid Data Recoverability, and Cost Savings

The NetApp solution has met all of Phoenix’s requirements, including support for a robust disaster recovery solution. The central site NetApp system creates a Snapshot copy of production data on an hourly basis and saves daily Snapshot copies for the previous 35 days. This enables Phoenix to almost instantly reconstruct 24 different points in time from the past 24 hours or restore from any of 35 additional dailies. All of this data is mirrored to the disaster recovery site to achieve the highest level of survivability and to ensure business continuance.

“In addition to ensuring our ability to continue operations within 48 hours after a disaster, the entire backup and recovery process has changed dramatically for the

better,” reports Geuli. “In the past, cold database backups took two hours—now we can complete them in under 15 minutes without server shutdowns. We recently made complete recovery of a 400GB database within three minutes. This would have taken at least five to six hours using tape.”

The efficiency of NetApp Snapshot technology is a definite advantage. “Even with the large number of Snapshot copies we maintain, the space required constitutes just 20% of total storage,” comments Geuli. “Other resources, including our network and servers, have been freed from the backup burden. In addition, the capability to easily create perfect copies lets our system developers perform tests and run applications on an identical data set without any risk to the central system itself.”

Phoenix has also realized significant financial benefits. The company has slashed its up-front capital expenditures (compared to those for deploying a Shark-based solution) and reduced ongoing administrative costs due to simplified storage management, fewer tape backup processes, streamlined scalability, better utilization of storage resources, and faster development cycles. Finally, moving more work to NetApp storage has freed up storage on the older Shark system, enabling Phoenix to more effectively utilize its existing investment.

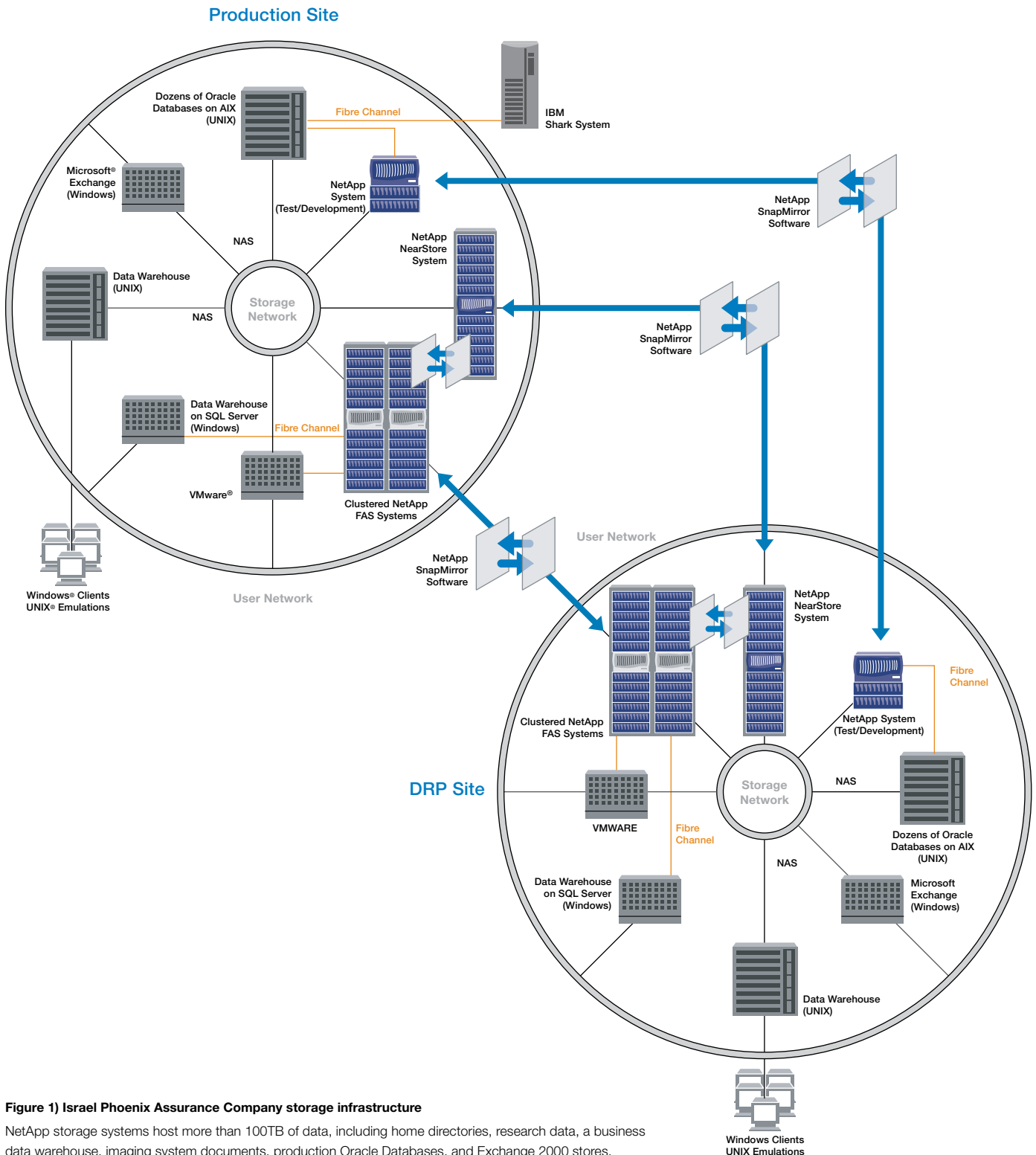


Figure 1) Israel Phoenix Assurance Company storage infrastructure

NetApp storage systems host more than 100TB of data, including home directories, research data, a business data warehouse, imaging system documents, production Oracle Databases, and Exchange 2000 stores. Business applications originally configured to write to an IBM Shark storage system now write simultaneously to the Shark and a NetApp system that serves as a failover for the Shark device. NetApp SnapMirror software replicates data from NetApp storage at the main site to a remote disaster recovery facility.

“Our decision to deploy NetApp storage solutions for both the central and the disaster recovery sites has provided immediate cost savings of hundreds of thousands of dollars and will save us considerably more in the long term,” says Geuli.

Geuli points out that disaster recovery site resources do not sit idle. In fact, the company leverages the remote NetApp system to house an important data warehouse.

“We use that site for implementing our data-warehousing system concurrently with an advanced business intelligence system, including OLAP and cubes. Systems of this type usually create a heavy load on the central system, but the NetApp solution offloads the main site, avoiding that problem altogether.

“One final point worth mentioning is the excellent service NetApp provides. Availability, expertise, extraordinary service—the NetApp team has proved a true partner on this project, giving us confidence in the project’s ultimate success. NetApp has clearly demonstrated a winning technology that reflects its broad experience and innovation in storage solutions,” concludes Geuli.

ABOUT NETWORK APPLIANCE

Network Appliance is a leading provider of innovative data management solutions that simplify the complexity of storing, managing, protecting, and retaining enterprise data. Market leaders around the world choose NetApp to help them reduce cost, minimize risk, and adapt to change. For solutions that deliver unmatched simplicity and value, visit us on the Web at www.netapp.com.

