

Ensuring Crucial Business Data Is Effectively Protected in the Cloud Era

South African insurer turns to Veritas to pave the way for its digital transformation.

Challenge

African financial services provider Liberty Group Ltd. must retain certain customer-related data for decades. Its legacy tape-based approach to long-term data retention was expensive, time-consuming to manage, and slow in restoring files.

Solution

The company transitioned from the tape-based infrastructure to a digital one, using Veritas NetBackup™ Appliances for primary backups, then transferring to a Veritas Access Appliance for longer-term storage. For backups that require retention beyond a year, NetBackup replicates to the Amazon Web Services (AWS) cloud.

Outcome

Liberty now uses Veritas NetBackup for data protection, the Veritas Access Appliance for long-term storage, Veritas InfoScale™ for storage virtualization, and Veritas APTARE for monitoring backup and recovery activities. The solution automates many data protection processes that previously consumed a significant amount of staff time. Backup windows have shrunk dramatically, and data restores that would have taken at least 48 hours in the legacy environment now happen immediately. The firm is saving about 900,000 rand per year on tape hardware and the offsite storage vault it formerly used. Best of all, the business is free to pursue digital transformation, while continuing to comply with regulatory requirements around data retention.



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Jayson Martin, Head of IT Data Storage, Liberty Group Ltd.



INDUSTRY

Insurance

EMPLOYEES

Approx 5,000

HEADQUARTERS

Johannesburg, South Africa

WEBSITE

liberty.co.za

Data Protection Meets Hefty Compliance Requirements

Located in Johannesburg, South Africa, Liberty frees individuals and businesses across 18 nations from the financial impact of worst-case scenarios. The company's comprehensive insurance products protect consumers across health, home, auto, and personal liability lines. Liberty's assorted investment options support wealth building throughout a customer's life—and its life insurance products extend financial protection even further, to the individual's heirs. Business investment and risk management solutions, as well as consulting and actuarial services, round out the firm's portfolio.

US\$100,000

Cost avoidance using Veritas
Access Appliance

Diversification of product line and geographic reach improve organizational resiliency, but they also increase the complexity of regulatory compliance. As a financial services provider operating in so many different markets, Liberty must prioritize compliance, including backup and recovery processes.

"In many cases, regulators require us to retain documentation and communications related to a customer relationship until five years after the conclusion of that relationship," explains Jayson Martin, Head of IT Data Storage for Liberty. "For life insurance customers, for example, that might mean we need to retain data for several decades."

To protect that data, Liberty has been using Veritas NetBackup for almost a decade. About four years ago, the company transitioned to NetBackup Appliances for primary backups, with a legacy tape environment for long-term retention. The company also rolled out Veritas InfoScale nearly a decade ago to optimize the efficiency and availability of its storage infrastructure. Martin reports that InfoScale storage virtualization accelerates storage performance, and he appreciates that his team can manage NetBackup and InfoScale through a single pane of glass.

Most important, the Veritas solution has kept Liberty's information safe. "We are very confident in the level of data protection we've achieved with NetBackup," Martin says. "In every circumstance we've faced, NetBackup has delivered the protection we've required. This was particularly crucial when we experienced a ransomware attack on our unstructured data. Without NetBackup, we could not have fully recovered on any timeline, which would have caused significant problems for our business. But because we had all the data in Veritas NetBackup, we were able to completely recover from the attack in just six hours."

New Backup Strategy for a New Era in Data Storage

Liberty is now in the process of moving data and applications to the cloud. "Our goal is to transform our workloads to function as efficiently as possible," says Martin. "In some cases, that just means digitalizing what were formerly paper-based processes. In other cases, we've realized that moving to the cloud would enable Liberty to more easily adapt to changing customer needs. So, we are looking to shift to cloud-native applications wherever we can."

The business has already moved core finance and customer management workloads, as well as its enterprise data platform, into Amazon Web Services (AWS). It has also transitioned all employees to Microsoft 365 office productivity applications. For the cloud-based solutions, the company is currently using built-in data protection.

Still, 90% of the company's data resides on-premises, primarily in its insurance-management platform. "As we analyzed our data storage and backup environment, the idea of continuing to use tapes for long-term retention in the cloud era made no sense to us," Martin says. Offsite storage for the tapes was expensive, and tape media was in short supply. Moreover, tape hardware upgrades required tedious data transfer.

"When we reconsidered our long-term data-retention strategy, we looked at ways to more easily retain data as subsequent generations

of technology are retired,” Martin says. “It made sense to transition to disk-based storage. Even when we upgrade to the next model, transferring data from disk to disk is much easier than moving from tape to tape.”

Significant Savings in Hardware, Offsite Storage, and Staff Time

Liberty installed a disk-based Veritas Access Appliance for long-term retention of backups. The company is also using NetBackup to move some of that data to the cloud. Now, the NetBackup Appliances remain the primary backup storage environment, but after two months, each backup moves to the Access Appliance for another year. At that point, backups which Liberty still needs to retain are replicated to AWS S3.

One key benefit of this infrastructure is “the simplicity of the integration,” Martin says. “NetBackup reduces the complexity of writing to the cloud, and the entire solution integrated easily into our existing data protection environment.”

Martin also appreciates the efficiency of data storage within the Access Appliance. “The built-in deduplication reduces both storage costs and the bandwidth required to support backup processes,” he says. “Our data will continue to grow, and it’s my job to find ways to prevent that from expanding our backup window. NetBackup Accelerator reduced our backup window significantly, and eliminating tape from our environment cut it even further.”

All told, he says, “using the Veritas Access Appliance for long-term retention has reduced our data protection costs by 1.74 rand per gigabyte. We have 500 terabytes of data, so that cost avoidance equates to almost 900,000 rand per year, which is close to US\$100,000.” The tape hardware and offsite storage costs are only one part of the reduction in total cost of ownership (TCO). “We are also saving a significant amount of staff time,” Martin adds. “All our backups are happening automatically, which frees up our staff for more valuable activities.”

The Access Appliance is also meeting Martin’s highest-priority need: fast and effective data recovery. “Restoring data from tapes used to take at least 48 hours,” he says. “But from the Access Appliance, we can restore immediately.” The Liberty IT group is using Veritas APTARE to keep an eye on backups and data restores. The solution monitors all of Liberty’s data protection processes and reports on backup performance. “If there are questions about the effectiveness of our data protection processes, we can turn to the statistics and demonstrate that specific backups and restores were both successful and fast.”

Liberty is also evaluating the prospective benefits of using NetBackup CloudPoint to protect its applications and data in the cloud using snapshots and replication across all workloads. “I think CloudPoint would probably do a better job of protecting the cloud apps we’re using than the cloud-native data protection that’s built in,” Martin says. “We are currently looking at the possibilities, but I expect to find NetBackup CloudPoint has the potential to revolutionize our cloud backups.”

“Veritas is a true partner to Liberty,” Martin concludes. “Utilizing different elements of the Veritas platform strengthens our data protection while increasing our staff efficiency and, ultimately, enables our business’s digital transformation.”

For More Information

Please contact your local Veritas Sales Representative or Business Partner, or visit [Veritas Access Appliance](#), [Veritas NetBackup](#), and [Veritas InfoScale](#)

About Veritas

Veritas Technologies is a global leader in data protection and availability. Over 80,000 customers—including 87 percent of the Fortune Global 500—rely on us to abstract IT complexity and simplify data management. The Veritas Enterprise Data Services Platform automates the protection and orchestrates the recovery of data everywhere it lives, ensures 24/7 availability of business-critical applications, and provides enterprises with the insights they need to comply with evolving data regulations. With a reputation for reliability at scale and a deployment model to fit any need, Veritas Enterprise Data Services Platform supports more than 800 different data sources, over 100 different operating systems, more than 1,400 storage targets, and more than 60 different cloud platforms. Learn more at www.veritas.com. Follow us on Twitter at [@veritastechllc](https://twitter.com/veritastechllc).

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