

Acronis® Keeps the Eurofighter Flying High



Setting the Scene

BAE Systems is the premier global defence, security and aerospace company delivering a full range of products and services for air, land and naval forces, as well as advanced electronics, security, information technology solutions and customer support services. With approximately 105,000 employees worldwide, BAE Systems' sales exceeded £18.5 billion (US \$34.4 billion) in 2008. The company has major operations across five continents, with a particularly strong presence in Australia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sweden, UK and the US. It has customers in over 100 countries and is credited with more than 100 new inventions each year.

BAE's Engineering Support System (ESS) product is used by the customer to manage and record the maintenance of the Eurofighter Typhoon fleet. The Eurofighter is an extremely agile fighter designed to dominate the skies in the 21st century. It is a single seat, twin-engine fighter with optimal performance in close combat and significant ground attack capabilities.

Need for speed and accuracy

The servers and workstations supported by the GIST IT team (GSS Installation Support and Training) play a key role in monitoring and recording all the in-flight data gathered from the Eurofighters. Quite simply, if the information on the systems is not available then the aircraft won't fly.

The department has over 1,000 dedicated workstations distributed across different bases internationally. The workstations have to have exactly the same systems settings and were initially built and deployed manually, with team members following a 300-page build document that explained every step of the process with military precision – making it an extremely demanding and time-consuming task. Lee Carden, Hardware Technical Authority for ESS, explains: "We have to be 100 percent accurate with each build or we run the risk of creating workstations that can't store and process data correctly. In some instances we need to build up to 200 workstations in a single location.

Organisation:

BAE Systems

Sector:

Defence

Key Challenges:

- Source a fast, reliable and secure way of deploying hundreds of workstations in one session
- Reduce workstation rebuild times in the event of a disaster

Environment:

1000 Workstations running on Windows® XP

Solution:

1000 Acronis® True Image Echo™ Workstation licences

Business Benefits:

- Benefits realised across 11 bases in Europe, with plans to expand to a further nine
- Software meets BAE's strict data security guidelines to support the department which oversees the Eurofighter Typhoon
- Average time for hundreds of workstations to be installed cut from over a month to just two days
- Deployment speed 30 times quicker than a manual build

Acronis delivers on-target deployment

Carden recognised that imaging technology was the best alternative to the manual build process because it captures a PC's operating system, applications and files. Initially he tried using Symantec's imaging software but it was unreliable and often filled valuable disk space with unrequested drivers and applications that slowed down the workstations. Carden looked to an alternative imaging provider, Acronis. After a thorough trial of the product, Carden was so impressed with the way in which Acronis' software worked that he purchased 1000 Acronis® True Image Echo™ Workstation licenses. The software allows Carden and his team to create a single master workstation image. This image comprises of the operating system, settings and applications and can be easily uploaded onto each machine. Unlike competing solutions, Acronis provides BAE with the option of uploading the image template across a network, from a master CD or DVD. "Although Acronis offers an effective network-based deployment option, we chose a CD-based method. That's because many of the applications and related data are extremely sensitive, and we don't want to run the risk – however small – that they might be detected by unauthorised personnel during a network-based download. Everything is carried out locally to protect our data," notes Carden.

300 page installation manual to 2 sides of A4 instructions

Acronis enables Carden and his team to deploy a workstation over 30 times faster than was possible with a manual build – slashing build time from over six hours to under ten minutes. This means that an entire base, which has around 200 workstations, can now have the image put on them in less than two days. This saves an incredible amount of time, plus resources in terms of man hours. "It would take over a month to fully deploy an average base before we invested in Acronis' software. The team love it because instead of having to adhere to a 300 page manual, they can deploy each workstation using instructions printed on just two sides of A4," says Carden. Acronis also plays a role in providing BAE with business continuity and recovery capabilities. If a workstation fails for any reason, Acronis' software is used to deploy the same image straight onto new hardware – keeping downtime and disruption to a minimum. This can be run at a local level from a boot CD or USB flash drive. Acronis is also used during the initial deployment process to protect against any errors or system crashes. If any problems occur during the deployment, Carden and his team simply roll the image back to a point before the error occurred and pick up the deployment from that point – which keeps installation times to an absolute minimum. Carden concludes: "We now use Acronis on approximately 1,000 workstations in 11 bases across Europe, and plan to expand our usage across a further nine bases in the near future. In our business it's crucial that the solutions are reliable, secure and robust. Acronis offers the most efficient, straight-forward and reliable way to carry out mass workstation deployment – there's nothing else on the market with same ease-of-use and dependability."

About BAE

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About Acronis®

Acronis is a global provider of storage management software that enables corporations and individuals to move, manage and maintain digital assets. Acronis sells innovative solutions for disaster recovery, server consolidation and virtualization migration, which allow users to maintain business continuity and reduce downtime in computing environments. Acronis software products are sold in more than 180 countries and are available in 13 languages. For additional information, please visit www.acronis.com.

