

Windhager ensures email availability with Acronis



Photo: Windhager

For years, the name Windhager has been associated with top quality heat generation and with complex, combined systems that meet the demands of modern central heating systems. The company's technological advantages and established market presence are closely related to its professional partnerships and customer communication. System stability is imperative. That's why Windhager has chosen Acronis' disaster recovery solutions for backing up its Exchange databases.

Stable, available communication: a significant performance indicator

From its beginnings in 1921 as a small locksmith shop, the Windhager company has become one of today's leading boiler manufacturers for wood and pellet heating systems as well as an established supplier of heating systems for all types of fuels in addition to solar systems. Windhager Zentralheizung recognised the trend toward sustainable heat generation early on and specialised in the manufacture of wood and, in particular, pellet heating systems. Tens of thousands of single and multiple family residences in Europe are already heated with biomass heating systems from Windhager. The manufacturer's expertise in this area is reflected in numerous awards such as the "Energy Genius" award from the Austrian Ministry for the Environment and the state of Upper Austria or the "Province of Salzburg Innovation Prize for Business". Technology-driven companies such as Windhager understand that their market success is closely linked to smoothly flowing communication processes. For this reason email is critical. In many companies electronic mail has become not only the favourite way to communicate, but it has also developed into a critical business application. Thomas Reisel, IT manager at Windhager with responsibility for IT systems across Germany and Switzerland, has declared this issue a top priority:

"Stable and available communication technology for daily exchange with our partners and customers is a significant performance indicator for us. Over the course of our international development, the direct influence that email service has on productivity, turnover, business processes and brand image has taken on significant value. That's why the task of finding a fast, easy solution for backing up our mail databases became one of the top priorities for me and my team."

Easy and speeding operations

At Windhager, the services for email communication for the German subsidiary ran on a Microsoft Exchange Server. The requirement that Thomas Reisel and the IT team had to meet was having a flexible and easy method of recovery for every loss scenario. This solution should enable granular restoration from the backed up database to recover individual email messages or mailboxes, as well as the complete database, in the shortest time possible. In a four week test phase, two disaster recovery solutions for backing up and recovering Exchange databases were tested based on the company's requirements. After this thorough testing, Windhager Deutschland opted for Acronis® Recovery™ for Microsoft® Exchange.

Company:

Windhager Zentralheizung GmbH

Industry:

Manufacturer of heating systems for all types of fuel and solar systems with a focus on wood and pellet heating

Key Challenge:

Quick, easily manageable disaster recovery solution for backup and granular restore of Microsoft Exchange databases

Solution:

- Acronis® Recovery™ for Microsoft® Exchange
- Acronis® True Image Echo™ corporate solutions

Benefits:

Fast, complete backup and granular restore from a single database backup, wizard-driven user interface, near CDP restore options and easy installation without product training. With this product, mail service continues while the database is restored. In addition, it can be centrally managed with existing Acronis software.

"Easy implementation is an important advantage for a small IT team that has to apportion its resources cost-effectively. Speed is vital here," says Thomas Reisel. A comparison test demonstrated that the installation of the Acronis software required significantly less time and effort than the alternative product. Using the wizard-driving user prompts, it only took one day to install the product. A brief training session of half an hour was all that was needed for the team to demonstrate how the Acronis solution works and what it can do. For the competitor product, multiple days of training would have been necessary plus installation, including trouble-shooting, would take up to a couple of weeks."

In addition to fast and easy implementation, it was important to Thomas Reisel's IT team that the database backup and granular restoration could also be accomplished within a brief time frame. For flexible recovery options at the email or mailbox level, other products on the market require time-consuming individual backups (brick level backups) in addition to a complete backup of the database. Acronis Recovery for Microsoft Exchange combines both of these techniques into one step. With this application, both a complete recovery and a granular database restoration can be performed from a single backup. To do this, administrators can use the wizard-driven user interface to access a logical overview of all of the steps required. A disaster recovery plan can be created automatically and guides users step by step through the desired type of recovery for the entire database and for individual mailboxes, elements or messages.

"The speed of the Acronis solution convinced us. In just ten minutes, 25 gigabytes were backed up during ongoing backup and recovery which can be performed with just a few mouse clicks. That saves us days," acknowledges Thomas Reisel. "With the wizards for the user interface, even administrators without database expertise can quickly orient themselves and in an emergency they can start the desired recovery procedure. In this way we can be sure that if a server goes down, users can be online again quickly and receive and send emails – even while the database restoration is still running."

Relief for the IT team: minimal loss of data and seamless integration

One technology that is often discussed in connection with backup solutions is the continuous real time backup of all data (continuous data protection, CDP), which uses backup windows to deal with the risk of losing data. However, because this technology requires increased time and effort for management and additional hardware costs, small and mid-sized enterprises often only use it in a limited way. Acronis Recovery for Microsoft Exchange offers integrated, near CDP functionality. By integrating the database's transaction protocol into the backup process administrators can achieve an error-free recovery with minimal loss of data.

Those responsible for IT were convinced by the level of technological maturity and the easy operation of Acronis Recovery for Microsoft Exchange, as well as the possibilities for its seamless application in combination with Acronis corporate solutions. Windhager cancelled the orders of competing suppliers and is now using the Exchange product as well as Acronis True Image Echo Server for Windows, Acronis True Image Echo Workstation and the additional option Acronis Universal Restore to ensure system stability in case of a failure among connected servers and workstations.

"From our perspective, this product has no competition. The easy operation and high speed of Acronis Recovery for Microsoft Exchange has taken a lot of pressure off of our IT team. An Exchange Service with about 50 gigabytes can be recovered within a few hours – this process took days in tests of the competitor product. The ability to perform all of the backup tasks for the mail databases, servers and workstations in the network from one location finally convinced us to use the Acronis solutions for all of our data backup issues. And we are still convinced today that this was the right decision."

About Windhager Zentralheizung

With 540 employees, this company, founded in 1921 in a small locksmith's shop in Seekirchen, Austria, is among the top enterprises in the Alp region. Production takes place exclusively at the company's home location. Currently, exports account for 60% of turnover. The three employees of the in-house research and development department are dedicated above all to the development of new, highly efficient central heating technologies for renewable energy.

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 virtualisation 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 15 languages.



For additional information please visit <http://www.acronis.eu> or e-mail sales_eu@acronis.com

UK, Northern Europe and MEA:	Central and Eastern Europe:	Southern Europe:
Acronis Ltd. Tel.: +44 203 1760340	Acronis Germany GmbH Tel.: +49 89 6137284-0	Acronis SAS Tel.: +33 1 42815531

Copyright © 2000-2009 Acronis, Inc. All rights reserved. "Acronis", "Acronis Compute with Confidence", "Acronis True Image Echo", "Active Restore", "Acronis Recovery" and the Acronis logo are trademarks of Acronis, Inc. Windows is a registered trademark of Microsoft Corporation. Other mentioned names may be trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners and should be regarded as such. Technical changes and differences from the illustrations are reserved; errors are excepted. 2009-03