

Ontrack®

# Control Legacy Data with Managed Tape Services

October 2019



# Get your Legacy Data Under Control with Tape Managed Services

## Compliance is King

For businesses all over the world, the long term archiving of data has become essential to adhere to compliance regulations. A data request can come in at any time. Businesses must be able to respond in a timely and accurate manner to ensure they remain compliant. Failure to comply with a compliance or litigation request can have a detrimental effect on an enterprise's bottom line.

Most businesses use tape for long term archives due to the lower cost compared to online alternatives. Yet, enterprises change backup platforms every few years due to cost and newer released capabilities, which can create additional complexity.

As businesses grow by acquisition, they often find themselves acquiring new legacy tapes. If these tapes have not been managed correctly, knowing what data is stored on them is almost impossible. As more and more information is archived, the challenge of ensuring access to legacy data and keeping it under control becomes more difficult.

## The Move to the Cloud

Organizations are moving backups to the cloud to reduce infrastructure and backup management costs. The new cloud environment may be simpler to use and maintain. But, moving legacy data from tapes to the cloud can be a complex and complicated process, especially when the organization does not know what data from the tapes need to be retained for compliance and moved to the cloud archive. The cost of keeping infrastructure onsite to restore from legacy tapes is not cheap either, especially when the majority of businesses only have ad hoc requests, predominately around email restores.

Other challenges businesses can face when using tape as an archiving solution are:

### ■ Retaining Staff with Relevant Knowledge

Being able to retain employees that have the relevant knowledge to access archived data at any given point is challenging. Especially when some data retention periods can be as long as 10, 30, or even 99 years. When an employee leaves, it is often challenging to ensure the transfer of knowledge to the new worker. In some cases, the new employee may have entirely different responsibilities, or the role is being made redundant. When this happens, businesses can find themselves in situations where no staff member has the knowledge to access the archived data.

### ■ Retired Backup Platforms

According to Gartner, companies switch backup platforms on average every three to four years. Over time, the effect of changing backup platforms every few years can result in businesses no longer having access to the software needed to access some of their archived data.

### ■ Lack of Knowledge Surrounding the Content of the Tapes

Not knowing the specific location of data can be a challenging element of archiving. Businesses can find themselves in situations where they lack the knowledge of what data resides on what tapes. Unmarked, old, and newly acquired tapes (through an acquisition) can often confuse businesses if not correctly cataloged.

### ■ Costs of Legacy Backup Server Software Licenses

Ongoing license costs for legacy backup server software can be an expensive recurring cost. Especially when a business may only need to do a restore once or twice a year. For many businesses, the cost outweighs the benefit.

So how can businesses that use tape for long-term archiving overcome these challenges and ensure that the data they store is easily accessible and cataloged without their costs spiraling out of control?

## Managed Services for Legacy Data

Getting control of the legacy data environment is critical for organizations in heavily regulated industries, such as finance, healthcare and government. One way for businesses to escape the challenges faced when archiving data is to work with a third-party provider who can manage the tapes. Referred to as "Managed Tape Services," a solution like this can ensure tape archives remain secure and ready for access, should a compliance request come in.

## Four Benefits of Using Third-Party Services

- 1 Organization** – Regardless of format, organization is key to identifying data when needed, no matter what the format. If not available from a backup server, most Managed Tapes Services providers can create a catalog for loose tapes to make it possible to understand what data is on the tapes. This information helps businesses decide what to retain and what data can be destroyed much easier. It also makes future big storage projects much easier to handle.
- 2 Cost-savings** – Managed Tape Services providers can allow businesses to remove the current legacy systems they maintain to manage old backup tapes. Businesses will typically pay for Managed Tape Services via a subscription; this model brings predictability to the costs of legacy data storage management.
- 3 Acquisitions/Mergers** – When archived data comes together from two different companies – especially in the financial sector – cataloguing and providing accessibility as-soon-as possible is essential for compliance.
- 4 Knowledge Retention** – Businesses can also reduce their dependence on employing staff with relevant knowledge about their legacy backup software; Managed Tape Services providers have the knowledge of most backup formats, allowing businesses to focus their IT staff on projects that support revenue growth and operational improvements.

Other benefits of Managed Tape Services include:

### ■ Read Tapes Written in Any Backup Format

Backup formats vary. If a business no longer has the software to read their tapes, a solution such as Managed Tape Services ensures that every tape owned can be read, catalogued and migrated to a current format. Some examples of backup formats include Backup Exec, Tivoli Storage Manager, Arcserve, NetBackup, HP Data Protector, NetVault, Veeam, NetWorker/Legato and Commvault. Many Managed Tape Services providers are continually investing in their technology to support additional backup platforms, tape formats, and new versions of each.

### ■ Index Tapes to Determine What Data is Stored

Indexing tapes can give a business a comprehensive and accurate overview of its archived data. Organized and easily accessible archived data ensures that it stays compliant and saves time and money in the future when looking for specific files. Managed Tape Services providers use the indexes to locate which tapes contain the data a client needs for a restore request.

### ■ Recover Data from Damaged or Corrupt Tapes

Corrupted, broken, or inaccessible tapes can be repaired and restored. Managed Tape Services providers with data recovery capabilities can restore and repair the majority of tape sets. Through the use of data recovery tools and processes, tape archives can be accessed quickly to ensure compliance with legal and government requests.

## Managed Services by Ontrack

With over 30 years of global experience in data management, data recovery, secure data erase, ediscovery and computer forensics, Ontrack has the knowledge and expertise to provide any business with Managed Tape Services.

A global service offering, Ontrack has a development team that continually updates its tools through synergies of work on enterprise data recovery projects and managed tape services.

Thanks to its comprehensive knowledge of the various storage media, operating systems, and underlying storage architectures, Ontrack's experts can quickly convert data from complex legacy environments to new storage media. In addition, Ontrack also offers comprehensive follow-up services for intelligent backup and data management.

## Examples of Ontrack's 'Managed Services' Projects

Ontrack works with a global consumer products company to restore specific data from its tapes stored in facilities in Europe, Asia, and Canada.

- **Service:** Restore specific items from tapes
- **Backup Software:** Avamar and Backup Exec
- **Contract Period:** Unlimited

Ontrack currently handles and restores tapes for a large global bank. The bank has hundreds of tapes stored in its facilities in Zurich, Singapore, and Hong Kong.

- **Service:** Restore Specific Items from tapes
- **Backup Software:** NetBackup
- **Contract Period:** 12 years

Ontrack restores legacy data for a large manufacturing company. Ontrack processes all the tapes in its laboratory in Wallisellen, Switzerland.

- **Service:** Ontrack provides a restore on-demand service for dedicated LTO6 tapes.
- **Backup Software:** NetWorker
- **Contract Period:** 10 years

## Conclusion

Data retention regulations are not going away. Businesses must ensure they have a reliable, effective solution for understanding and accessing their legacy tape data.

The complexities of multiple backup formats, lack of backup servers and staff with knowledge of legacy systems make it difficult to remain in compliance without help.

Managed Tape Services providers can solve these challenges for organizations, reduce risk and cost, and free up resources for new revenue-generating projects.