

Managing Distributed Backup Servers

Companies today are facing the ever-increasing challenge of protecting and managing the valuable data residing on servers outside the data center. IT management of remote offices, or distributed networks, differs from that of centrally managed storage. Together, VERITAS Backup Exec™ 9.0 for Windows Servers and VERITAS® Admin Plus Pack Option software allow administrators to install, monitor, and manage remote servers.

BY VERITAS SOFTWARE CORPORATION

Traditionally, server computing environments, from the enterprise level to small- and medium-size businesses, have been physically consolidated: Storage hardware, including backup servers and their associated storage devices, has been placed close together in the same data center or server room. However, organizations have increasingly deployed backup and recovery servers outside the data center at remote locations.

Organizations have made this move to remote servers for several reasons. First, server hardware and software have become integral to the successful daily operation of most organizations, including their remote branch offices. Second, new products are available for helping deployment of servers in remote distributed locations to be more effective and for helping to provide a quicker return on investment (ROI). Wide area network (WAN) and storage area network (SAN) products, combined with advanced point-of-sale computing and Internet-connected computing, have encouraged server deployment in geographically distributed workgroup and branch office environments (see Figure 1).

Although remote server deployment has advantages, geographically distributed IT environments can be difficult

to manage when IT administrators are not on site to maintain, monitor, and troubleshoot backup jobs. When managing multiple remote backup servers, IT administrators need backup software that allows them to manage all their distributed backup servers from a single data center console, eliminating the need to travel to remote sites.

Identifying useful features in backup software

Effective management of a highly distributed storage network requires the ability to consistently and efficiently install data protection applications, proactively monitor media server activities, and generate service level reports on storage management activities. Remote backup software should allow for the following:

- Complete backup server deployment
- Backup job development and setup
- Backup job and server monitoring
- Alert and notification
- Remote problem investigation
- Remote server administration
- Single and multiserver historical reporting

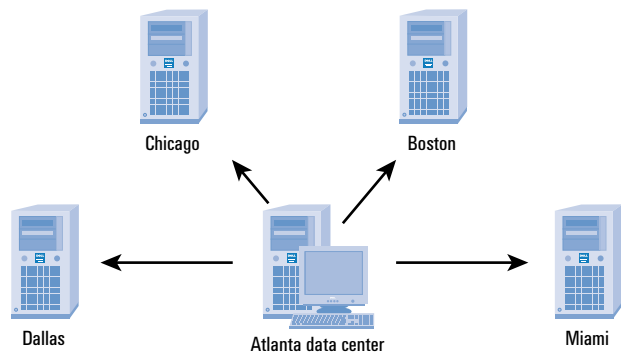


Figure 1. Remote branch offices: Geographically distributed backup servers

Backup software for a distributed server network must also be reliable and cost-effective. A persistent connection between the remote backup server and any other backup server should not be required, and the software should enable the remote backup server to work independently when network connections go down. In addition, deployment of the backup software should not require special hardware or expensive, front-end-loaded software.

Another desirable feature of backup software is scalability, so that administrators can deploy, monitor, and manage hundreds of remote backup servers from a single console. Because an organization's many remote sites may be exact images of themselves, the software should have features that minimize repetitive deployment and management tasks for administrators.

Examining Backup Exec and Admin Plus Pack Option

VERITAS Backup Exec™ 9.0 for Windows Servers storage management software helps organizations manage distributed backup server networks. Several Backup Exec components can be used in concert to perform the total life-cycle management of local and remote Backup Exec servers and their daily operations. These components consist of Backup Exec 9.0 for Windows Servers, which includes ExecView Console and Backup Exec Remote Administrator, and VERITAS® Admin Plus Pack Option, an optional addition.

ExecView Console is a Web-based user interface that allows an administrator to monitor all Backup Exec media servers and the jobs for those servers from a single console. ExecView also contains server grouping capabilities, alert and notification features, and basic administrative functions. Using ExecView, administrators can:

- Monitor and manage up to hundreds of Backup Exec servers from any computer that has Internet access
- Customize “Management by exception” views of Backup Exec servers on the network by creating views for grouped backup servers, alerts to be highlighted, or devices to be monitored


- Remotely access any Backup Exec server through the Admin console, providing direct control of the Backup Exec functions from any other Backup Exec server on the network

Backup Exec Remote Administrator allows administrators to directly access the local interface of any remote Backup Exec server. Using Remote Administrator, administrators can quickly investigate and address issues associated with distant backup servers, or can perform routine maintenance.

Admin Plus Pack Option, new in Backup Exec 9.0, contains features designed to assist administrators who must deploy software and set up jobs on multiple backup servers distributed throughout the network. Using Admin Plus Pack, administrators can:

- Create a consistent Backup Exec image for remote backup servers using push-install technology through the network or silent local installations from custom CDs
- Streamline job creation and job distribution for remote servers using the Job Templates and Job Copy features
- Generate 24 additional reports that consolidate information for single and multiserver Backup Exec deployments
- Schedule advanced alerting and reporting
- Send alerts and reports to distribution lists through e-mail

Realizing new efficiencies

IT organizations increasingly need backup and restore software that will protect data at remote sites with the same high degree of reliability they have achieved in the data center. For businesses that deploy servers in different remote locations, VERITAS Backup Exec 9.0 for Windows Servers offers data protection, backup server deployment, and backup server management capabilities when teamed with the Admin Plus Pack Option. Administrators using this software can manage all distributed backup servers from a single data center console, eliminating the need to travel to remote sites. Highly scalable and designed to enhance reliability in lower quality data-transmission environments, Backup Exec and the Admin Plus Pack Option are also cost-sensitive. The software requires no additional hardware and minimizes repetitive deployment and management tasks, helping to save time and overhead. 

VERITAS Software Corporation (<http://www.veritas.com>) provides data availability software solutions that enable customers to protect and access their business-critical data.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information or to download a copy of the “Managing Distributed Backup Servers” white paper, visit: <http://www.veritas.com>