



Objective

ZaneRay needed a secure, fast, and reliable way to back up virtual machines in its office and remote colocation facility

Approach

In August 2015, ZaneRay started using HPE VM Explorer, a virtual machine backup solution, for twice-monthly backups of its entire IT environment and for daily incremental backups

IT Matters

- Works seamlessly with VMware virtual machines
- Offers user-friendly online and desktop interfaces
- Protects 6.5 TB of critical website and development data

Business Matters

- Speed: Able to run an incremental backup in less than half an hour
- Availability: Meets 99.99% uptime service level agreements with the help of quick restores
- Cost: Accesses enterprise-grade VM backup and recovery at an affordable price

ZaneRay protects global websites with HPE VM Explorer

HPE VM Explorer allows Montana-based web design and e-commerce consultant to back up and restore virtual machines fast



Located near the soaring mountains of Whitefish Montana, ZaneRay manages and hosts e-commerce websites for world-leading outdoor brands including buckknives.com, jacksonhole.com and ospreypacks.com. In August 2015, it started using HPE VM Explorer to back up more than 70 virtual machines at its Whitefish office and colocation facility in Spokane, Washington. VM Explorer software has

helped ZaneRay meet strict client performance and Payment Card Industry (PCI) e-commerce requirements.

The challenge

Protecting high-value websites and internal systems

Founded in 2001, ZaneRay employs 23 people and prides itself on a culture that mixes hard work with outside recreation. It designs and supports e-commerce websites for high-profile companies, including many in the outdoor sports and exercise industry, such as buckknives.com, jacksonhole.com and ospreypacks.com.

ZaneRay hosts these websites and related production and business systems at its offices in Whitefish, Montana, and a colocation facility

“HPE VM Explorer has given us the opportunity to access enterprise-level performance even though we’re a relatively small business. It’s better than anything else we’ve ever used.”

– Brennan Sandusky, Systems Director and Senior Software Engineer, ZaneRay

in Spokane, Washington. All of its servers use VMware® vSphere®. Each server has around 300 GB of storage and up to 24 GB of RAM, with some clients storing up to 100 GB of image files alone.

With so much valuable data involved, it is critical ZaneRay is confident in its VM backup and recovery capabilities. However, after upgrading to VMware 6.0 in mid-2015 to run approximately 70 virtual machines, the company’s backup and restore attempts were failing up to one-third of the time. In turn, it needed to implement a more advanced solution to maintain its required levels of resilience and availability in its expanded virtual computing environment.

The solution

VM Explorer Enterprise Edition

ZaneRay implemented the Enterprise Edition of VM Explorer in August 2015 to manage its virtual servers, gain fast VM backup and restoration capabilities, and access world class encryption options—all at an affordable price.

“We could run two instances on separate licenses to support as many servers as we need, and still stay within budget,” says Brennan Sandusky, ZaneRay’s Systems Director. “VM Explorer is exactly the product I was looking for.”

VM Explorer also offered incremental backups and an instant recovery for VMware ESX/ESXi servers.

“I don’t think smaller businesses should need to compromise on the quality of their backup routines,” says Sandusky. “With VM Explorer, I knew we would be able to access all the features of an industry-leading data protection product.”

Blazingly fast backups and restores

ZaneRay’s engineering team uses VM Explorer daily to secure the data on the company’s servers with incremental backups. These each take less than half an hour to complete and captures about 100 GB of changed data. Twice a month, the team also fully backs up the entire IT environment in both Spokane and Whitefish, which holds about 6.5 TB of data.

For Sandusky, one of the most useful features of VM Explorer is its ability to perform fast restores if any of ZaneRay’s servers go offline. Complete virtual machines can be recovered in as few as three minutes, which is critical to ZaneRay’s ability to promise its customers a 99.99 percent service uptime.

Easy operation

The ZaneRay team needn’t worry about accessing or managing multiple backup instances. Instead, they need only run one

Customer at a glance

Application

Backup and restore virtual machines quickly

Software

- VM Explorer

instance for each of ZaneRay's two locations. This makes VM Explorer an affordable option for smaller businesses that want enterprise-level performance.

"The fact that we only have to run two instances in two areas is incredible," says Sandusky. "It frees up my team to work on other things and gives us peace of mind."

Easy configuration with an accessible web interface

VM Explorer can be managed via a web interface or a desktop console. For Sandusky, this provides an appealing degree of flexibility and accessibility. He and his staff can manage backups and restorations from any computer with an internet connection. This allows them to configure backup and restoration processes with confidence before leaving them to run automatically.

Meeting the Payment Card Industry criteria

Using VM Explorer's encryption and Microsoft® Active Directory® integration features, ZaneRay has been able to achieve a high degree of security across its environment. As a result, it has maintained its accreditation as a PCI-compliant company. The Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) is a set of industry standards that govern how businesses store and transmit sensitive financial information.

Future plans

Sandusky is exploring the use of VM Explorer's automatic backup tests capability to provide ZaneRay's clients with an additional layer of reassurance.

On the whole, Sandusky is confident that VM Explorer will play an important role in the long-term management of ZaneRay's IT environment. "VM Explorer has given us the opportunity to access enterprise-level performance, even though we're a relatively small business," he says. "It's better than anything else we've ever used."

Learn more at
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