Kroll Ontrack®

CASE STUDY

Accius® case study - don't let your cloud burst.

Individuals and businesses are creating new data at unprecedented rates and the resulting growth in the digital universe is creating huge demand for cloud-based storage. In fact, in a recent survey by GigaOM®, 71 per cent of respondents agreed that by 2020 we will mostly live in the cloud, rather than the desktop. Users of cloud-based Storage as a Service (SaaS) can benefit from world-class technology services without being tied to a dedicated computing infrastructure.

"While cloud computing can provide storage optimisation without being tied to dedicated computing infrastructure, hardware is still at the root of this technology, making these storage solutions not exempt from data loss. Cloud data is consolidated and stored on physical servers and things can go wrong as with any other form of storage technology".

— Todd Johnson
Vice President of Operations at Kroll Ontrack

THE CLIENT

One of Kroll Ontrack's first cloud recoveries was for Accius Systems Corporation, a developer of custom energy and trading software for global corporations. Accius was using Amazon® Elastic Compute Cloud™ (Amazon® EC2™) to host a development and testing environment for a new energy business application and data mart.

THE SITUATION

The Accius development server had become unresponsive and failed to re-boot, so Accius started the process of 'disassembling' the virtual machine to prepare for launching a new development server. However, a software engineer at Accius forcibly detached one of the virtual storage volumes from the unresponsive server, which is the same as pulling a cable from an operational volume. When the volume was re-connected to a Windows host, Windows found the volume to be corrupt. Amazon's technical support advised that the only way to recover the data was to use a data recovery tool or company – so Accius contacted Kroll Ontrack who provided a free consultation.

Accius President Douglas Moore said, "Time was business critical and recreating or re-building the development environment would have added an additional two to three days to the project - time we didn't have. The three days' labour we had invested would have also gone to waste. We must do all we can to ensure we successfully meet our clients' expectations."

THE SOLUTION

"When I called Kroll Ontrack, I was quickly connected to an engineer who spent an hour assessing our data loss situation, considering such factors as how we store our data, the technology and type of data involved, and how we thought the data loss happened," explained Douglas.

Accius was quickly connected to Kroll Ontrack using their proprietary Ontrack® Remote Data Recovery™ (RDR®) process. The RDR engineer was able to repair the damaged cloud storage volume and recover the critical data.

RDR is a patented technology that consists of three main components:

Communications Client Accius initiated a connection to an RDR Server using the specially designed RDR® QuickStart™ software. After installing the application, Accius then selected its internet connection as its mode of communication.

RDR Server Once Accius established a connection with the RDR Server it was then routed to the next available RDR engineer.

An illustration showing the Ontrack Remote Data Recovery connection to Accius' server via secure internet connection
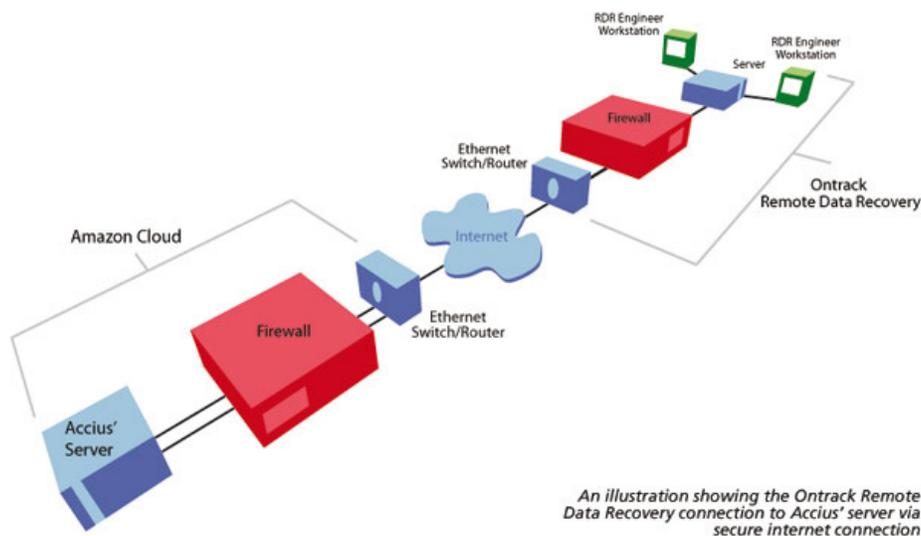
RDR work station A specially designed application allowed the RDR engineer to run advanced data recovery tools on Accius' computer system that lost data. Before beginning the recovery process, the engineer enabled proprietary technologies that track and backup all changes that could be made to the system. This process provided the engineer with the ability to complete the recovery "virtually" before any changes were made to the system. Any changes made could be reversed or modified in order to provide the most complete recovery possible.

THE OUTCOME

David Logue, Lead Remote Data Recovery Engineer at Kroll Ontrack commented, "Fortunately, we were able to connect to Accius' virtual cloud system via the internet connection to perform a lab-quality data recovery. Unless the drive is physically or electronically failing, we can perform the same recoveries in RDR as we can in-lab, thereby ensuring the same level of quality, satisfaction and customer service."

Kroll Ontrack was able to recover the data, repair the damaged cloud storage volume and get the project up and running in two hours. The damaged volume was repaired and was accessible immediately upon completion of the recovery, all within four hours of the data loss occurring.

"Kroll Ontrack responded quickly to our call for help and also understood that we needed to restore the data quickly to safeguard Accius' reputation. Kroll Ontrack really understands the data recovery business and as one of only a few companies with the expertise to recover data from the cloud, Kroll Ontrack will be our first port of call should we require their services in future."

THE RESOLUTION

"To guard against another data loss, Accius is investigating ways to improve its cloud development processes to reflect the change to their IT infrastructure as a result of using cloud-based servers. Virtual systems have to be treated with the same care as SAN or physical hard disks," commented Logue.

The data loss has also been a learning experience for Accius' staff who now understand that cloud computing resources are susceptible to real types of failures. The potential for human error to cause data loss is still present in the cloud. A survey in 2009 by Kroll Ontrack underscores this further with the finding that 65 percent of data loss in virtual environments is the result of human error.

"Pinning down the different types of data loss scenarios with your cloud provider before you commit to their storage solution can be valuable in preventing or addressing issues", said Logue. "Accius is just one of several organisations we have helped who have experienced data loss in the cloud. As more companies choose cloud storage solutions for their data there is the potential for data losses to increase", said Logue.

CONTACT

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