



ILLINOIS CPA SOCIETY.

Illinois CPA Society Sees Advantages of Zenith Infotech's ARCA

"The Zenith ARCA (Advanced Recovery and Continuity Appliance) installed very easily. We can now restore single files, folders and emails in under 15 minutes — saving us huge amounts of staff time. I highly recommend the Zenith ARCA solution to anyone looking to eliminate tape, and for remote office backup and disaster recovery."

— Ernesto Mijes, Network Administrator

As the fifth largest state society of CPAs in the nation (more than 24,000 members), the leadership of the Illinois CPA Society (ICPAS) expects to set a good example for those in the accounting profession. This includes complying with such government regulations as the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act and Sarbanes-Oxley; as well as any state regulations that apply to profit and nonprofit organizations. ICPAS seeks to establish best practices in its operations. These standards indicate stability and proficiency as an organization. A key component of these goals is having a first-rate business continuity solution in place, and ICPAS was finding their backup system to be deficient in many ways.

The ICPAS was relying on a tape backup-based continuity solution at both offices (in Chicago and Springfield) and the technical staff realized something better was needed. Specific problems included:

- Often the tapes being relied upon for simple everyday restoration efforts — single file or emails — were corrupted, which ominously suggested any major restoration effort would also fail.

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Company: Illinois CPA Society
Chicago and Springfield, IL

Web Site: www.icpas.org

Challenges: The technical staff at ICPAS realized they needed a better backup and disaster recovery. The tape-based system they had was expensive, difficult to maintain and often resulted in corrupted data.

Solution: Zenith Infotech's ARCA (Advanced Recovery and Continuity Appliance) is a disk-to-disk solution that addresses the deficiencies of tape backup, greatly reduces costs, and is a vast improvement in terms of labor intensiveness.

Results: Not only does ARCA provide a business continuity solution that protects data and allows quick resumption of operations following a network failure, adopting Zenith Infotech's ARCA has also enabled an upgrade in service to the organization's professional membership base.

Zenith Infotech ARCA: Zenith Infotech's ARCA can restore downed servers in as little as five minutes, or create standby servers in less than fifteen. This reasonably priced, all-encompassing solution includes:

- Frequent backups
- Multiple restore points (as often as every 15 minutes)
- Standby server virtualization
- Bare metal restorations to dissimilar hardware
- Optional offsite remote storage



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- Rotating tapes, sending them offsite and general management, as well as providing necessary technical support was requiring too many man hours.
- The cost of upkeep and maintenance was too high for the value received. Tape drives would fail, software companies constantly charged for upgrades, and additional agents and tape replacement were becoming a costly and unbudgeted expense.

As the IT staff at ICPAS began to consider alternatives to their existing tape-based system, they realized they didn't want to simply correct the shortcomings; they wanted a business continuity solution that would also enable an upgrade in service to the organizations very professional membership base.

When Zenith Infotech's ARCA (Advanced Recovery and Continuity Appliance) came to the attention of the ICPAS technical team, there was skepticism. "I was quite doubtful about the Zenith ARCA solution when I first encountered the product," recalls Ernesto Mijes, the network administrator for ICPAS. "One product that would do all my backup, offsite replication and disaster recovery seemed too good to be true. However, with a 45-day, money-back guarantee, we decided to bring the Zenith ARCA into our environment and test it out."

During testing, it didn't take long to realize that the ARCA would not simply meet the requirements, but would far exceed expectations. "The Zenith ARCA installed very easily. Any issues we have had were quickly addressed by the Zenith support staff," Ernesto recalls. As the team ran the ARCA through its paces, they immediately saw how well

it performed in terms of rapid failover capability, ease of installation, syncing with other ARCA appliances or a USB drive, and speedy restoration of single emails and files. Additionally, the data "snapshots" taken at 15-minute intervals provided a tremendous improvement over the single nightly backups that had been standard procedure. ICPAS had found its new business continuity solution.

And, just as had been desired, the ARCA delivered other improvements over the previous tape-backup system. "I was also pleased with the built-in monitoring, management and reporting modules — something we really didn't have with prior solutions," Ernest says. "The reports are easy to read and help us report back to management that our systems are protected and running smoothly." Other features and benefits that impressed the ICPAS IT staff were:

- Easy migration of servers
- Sandbox environment for patch and upgrade testing
- Three-year hardware warranty (included in base cost)
- Three years 24/7 chat support (included in base cost)
- Three years software maintenance and upgrades (included in base cost)

Finally, and most importantly the ARCA-to-ARCA replication ends the need to rotate tapes offsite, or to send staff to a remote site to manage backups. This allows the local IT staff to restore files or an entire server remotely in minutes. "I highly recommend the Zenith ARCA solution to anyone looking to eliminate tape and for remote office backup and disaster recovery," Ernesto concludes.

"Since we have an ARCA at our main site and our remote site, we can easily replicate our data between sites — incurring no additional offsite charges. I was also pleased with the built in monitoring, management and reporting modules; something we really didn't have with prior solutions. The reports are easy to read and help us report back to management that our systems are protected and running smoothly."

– Ernesto Mijes, Network Administrator
