



Canadian Law Firm Swears on EVault

We've all heard it before – lawyers live and die by the clock. Working long hours to meet crucial deadlines, there is little time for mistakes, especially those involving an accidental deletion or saving over crucial documents. Unfortunately, as anywhere, this is a common occurrence in law firms, the difference being that lawyers tend to keep a lot of documents, upping the chances for critical information to get lost. Resorting to tape backup helps retrieve the data, but it certainly does not save time – in some cases, it may take the firm days to recover time-sensitive information that somehow got lost.

One law firm, Fraser Millner Casgrain (FMC), has found a way around this monumental time and resource drain. FMC is one of the leading Canadian law firms, with over 1,500 employees – 550 of which are lawyers – spread out across locations in Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver. Each of the lawyers in these locations share important information and files. However, as Lewis Robbins, chief information officer, FMC, reported, “We have to backup on a daily basis. Someone will either accidentally delete or overwrite a document, which means that we need to go back and attempt to retrieve the data in a timely manner. This happens about six times a week.”

The key word in that sentence, according to Robbins, is “timely.” Because lawyers work with critical, sensitive information that can affect the outcome of major cases or law suits, and are generally strapped for time, documents must be retrieved as soon as possible. This was a difficult task under FMC's original backup system – tape.

“There were two major problems that we were running into,” said Robbins. “First, we were spending a lot of money on backup tapes. With the amount of use we were getting out of them, we were faced with the continual purchase of new tapes, as well as making a significant investment in multiple tape loaders. This was getting to be very, very expensive.

EVault's online data backup proves faster, more reliable than tape-based system for Fraser Millner Casgrain, one of the leading Canadian law firms.

Employs: 1500, 550 lawyers
Office locations: Toronto, Montreal, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver
Backup: Over 200GB

The true ROI here is the speed with which you can use EVault to recover data, regardless of how much information you are backing up. It's much, much faster and more reliable than tape."

Lewis Robbins, CIO, FMC

"Second, and most importantly, our tape-based system proved to be very time-consuming. Whenever we wanted to retrieve a document that had been accidentally lost it took, at times, up to a whole day. This is due to the fact that you have to physically retrieve the tape, bring it back to the office, and then search throughout for the information that you're looking for. That takes a lot of effort and man-hours, and waiting for the necessary information to be retrieved is a very painful process for lawyers."

EVault's Online Backup Proves to Be the Answer

When tape backup became too costly and time-consuming, Robbins turned to a company that was providing a useful alternative to tape-based systems. EVault, a provider of online data backup and disaster recovery solutions, presented Robbins with a plan to transfer all of FMC's data to secure, off-site vaults. This process – "EVaulting" – was specifically designed to easily back up data at any pre-set time of the day and automatically and safely transfer it using the Internet. Once inside the vaults, companies can easily and quickly access the data they need, performing a full restore in a matter of minutes, rather than days. "With EVault, we're able to backup data online every night, after the work day is over and no one else is around," said Robbins. "Then, once we do need to retrieve information, we can access it online and get it back and fully restored in about a half-hour – a far cry from the days when it would take 24 hours to get everything back in order."

Robbins said that he is primarily using EVault to manage backups across a mixed Microsoft and Novell network in two locations – Toronto and Ottawa. "There are about 600 employees spread between the two of them," he said, "which means a lot of data to manage."

So far, so good. Robbins said that he is happy with the time that EVault has saved him and his lawyer colleagues. "If you figure that FMC has a couple of million documents online and over 200GB of data, you have to figure that some U.S. law firms hold substantially more. That's what makes EVault's online data backup so important for law firms. The true ROI here is the speed with which you can use EVault to recover data, regardless of how much information you are backing up. It's much, much faster and more reliable than tape."

Sounds like the jury is no longer out on the potential of online data backup and recovery.