

ABI Building Data Limited

- Hardware Failure

ABI Building Data Limited publishes comprehensive information on property and construction projects. Every week dedicated researchers identify new projects and gather the information their subscribers need to gain new business.

ABI reports on around 7,000 new projects each week, from this database. Tailored reports are produced to help a wide range of customers involved in, or affected by, construction. These companies range from those traditionally involved in construction such as contractors or product suppliers, through to organisations providing a service to a new building, such as recruitment or telecommunications companies.

The weekly research, publishing and marketing process involves 170 staff working to a tight schedule. Printing takes place each night, when personalised reports are prepared from the research completed that day. Telesales marketing staff also use the latest reports as their primary sales tool. For Giles Armitage, IT Manager, one day in which staff are unable to access the computer database of projects means the loss of 170 working days. The knock-on effects on the weekly schedule could mean that customer reports are delayed - a situation that he cannot remember and plans to avoid.

In the early afternoon of Friday 7 April 2000, a hardware fault occurred on a disk supporting the main Oracle database. The bulk of ABI's research and marketing staff were unable to work. Whilst this was not a yet a crisis, it was clear that the system needed to be repaired over the weekend so that it would be running by Monday morning.

Giles Armitage called the server supplier who was contracted to respond within four hours. At 6:00pm the engineer arrived and replaced the failed disk. The engineer was, however, unwilling to undertake the software procedures needed to get the disk operational. It was already well into Friday evening and the only option presented to Giles Armitage was to request a software engineer to attend on Monday.

By now, the rest of ABI's staff had gone for the weekend. Giles Armitage considered the situation – and its inherent implications for the business - and decided to call SunGard Availability Services (formerly Guardian iT) for support under the relocatable restart service.

Within minutes, he received a return call from a person with knowledge about his particular system. SunGard prepares to support all customers by assigning a team to develop procedures for handling both likely and unlikely scenarios. As part of this process, SunGard had already established a script for this eventuality -

mapping and remounting the disk. With a single instruction provided over the phone, the disk was operational.

The night was not quite over for Giles Armitage, who then worked with Oracle worldwide support to reinstate the database. For the 170 staff returning on Monday morning the system was again fully operational and the database was available for use.

The value of the SunGard service is very clear to Giles Armitage: "The cost of having staff unable to work for only one day justifies our investment in the contract". Reflecting on the events of Friday 7 April, he states: "I was very impressed with the rapid support and friendly attitude of SunGard staff in a time of stress. Their familiarity with our particular system and their prior preparation meant that when failure did happen only one command procedure was needed to get us operational. Compliments all round."

The Situation

ABI Building Data Limited gathers, processes and publishes detailed information on property and construction projects. This involves 170 staff working to a tight schedule. In April 2000, a hardware fault occurred on a disk supporting the main Oracle database. ABI's research and marketing staff were unable to work all Friday afternoon. By late in the evening the disk had been physically replaced but no one was available to help get the system operational.

The Solution

ABI called SunGard Availability Services for support under its relocatable restart service contract. With pre-prepared and rehearsed procedures developed to cover a range of scenarios, it only required one command procedure to get ABI operational.

The Result

Business as usual on Monday morning.

Quote

"I was very impressed with the rapid support and friendly attitude of SunGard staff in a time of stress. Their familiarity with our particular system and their prior preparation meant that when failure did happen only one command procedure was needed to get us operational. Compliments all round."

Giles Armitage, IT Manager, ABI Building Data Limited.

About SunGard Availability Services

SunGard Availability Services is the pioneer and leading provider of information availability services, helping to ensure that more than 10,000 clients in North America and Europe have uninterrupted access to their business-critical information systems. With over 3 million sq. ft. of hardened facilities, it offers a complete range of information availability services for more than 30 technology platforms, from 48 hour disaster recovery hot sites to always-on, high availability

infrastructure, co-location and electronic vaulting services. SunGard also provides technology and systems management services for application and data centre outsourcing, as well as business continuity consulting services and planning software.

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