druva

sembcorp

Sembcorp secures endpoints and fills Microsoft 365 gaps with Druva

3,000+
Endpoints backed up with Druva, with data accessible 24x7

12x
Faster email restore speeds with Druva compared to Microsoft

About Sembcorp

Sembcorp Industries (Sembcorp) is a leading energy and urban development player, driven by its passion to do good and play its part in creating a sustainable future. Leveraging its sector expertise and global track record, Sembcorp delivers innovative energy and urban solutions that support the energy transition and sustainable development, creating value for its stakeholders and communities.

The challenge

To create a more sustainable future, Sembcorp required the right IT infrastructure. Headquartered in Singapore, Sembcorp's Digital and Technology (D&T) team supports staff across Asia and the United Kingdom. The team works to free up regional staff for crucial assignments by running backend technologies for infrastructure, networking, end-user computing, enterprise applications, data science, and self-service at the corporate level.

The D&T IT service management team launched a cloud-first strategy in 2017 and began migrating from on-premises servers to a Microsoft Azure-based cloud solution. Since then, the company has used a suite of software-as-a-service (SaaS) and cloud-native technologies to meet business needs.

Challenges

- Lack of a suitable Microsoft Exchange backup solution left the company open to data loss due to deletion, corruption, or attack
- Dependence on Microsoft's default litigation elements and email journaling to recover lost or deleted emails
- Insufficient DR/BCP technology meant it could take many days to recover lost or deleted emails

Solution

- A single pane of glass through which IT can manage backups and restores for 3,000+ endpoints and Microsoft 365 instances (Exchange Online)
- Natural air gap, as backups and restores are securely stored in AWS and are not part of Sembcorp's data center or corporate network
- A cloud-native solution for backups and restores that helps the team deliver a solid DR/BCP strategy

Results

- The ability to switch from a Capex to an Opex business model, which empowers a stronger corporate cloud strategy and facilitates quicker scale up/down
- 12x faster restore speeds with Druva, enabling the team to meet SLAs for DR and BCP
- 100% visibility of Microsoft Exchange data for staff across the globe, facilitating compliance with GDPR and PDPA

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As part of its cloud strategy, Sembcorp IT migrated Microsoft Exchange on-premises to Microsoft 365, but needed a reliable way to back up the data. At the time, the team relied on the default Microsoft litigation elements and email journaling, but felt exposed and needed better data protection, said Nigel Watson, Global Head of IT Shared Services.

"We had a compelling event where an executive's calendar got deleted and it took several days to restore," Nigel said. "We didn't have an appropriate disaster recovery (DR) and business continuity planning (BCP) program in place to recover quickly for such specific events. Sure, journaling captures every single email, but it doesn't retain folder structures or calendaring, so we essentially had to build a mailbox back from scratch."

The solution

Nigel's team began its search for a cloud-native solution that could make data retrieval simpler and quicker. Other requirements were always-on Microsoft 365 data availability, self-serve capability, and easy scalability.

It evaluated several backup and recovery solutions, including SolarWinds, Commvault Metallic, Veeam, Acronis, and Druva. Veeam was ruled out because it required on-premises storage and because its licensing costs and complexity were too high.

The team considered Commvault since it was already using it to back up on-premises and cloud-hosted servers, but the additional storage costs made the solution sub-optimal. These were key reasons why the team chose to extend its use of Druva, which it uses to secure 3,000+ endpoints for Microsoft 365 data protection. "With Druva, we pay one license fee per person and that includes everything — the platform, the individual user license, and the storage," Nigel said.

What differentiated Druva is the cloud-native nature of the solution, which allows Sembcorp to switch from a Capex to an Opex business model, and easily scale the solution up and down. The natural air gap that Druva provides is key as backups and restores reside in Amazon Web Services (AWS) and are not part of Sembcorp's data center or corporate network. "Druva gives us a higher level of security with end-to-end encryption, guaranteed durability and availability, and allows Sembcorp IT to meet our service level agreements (SLAs) with our constituents," said Nigel.

The results

"We finally have the capability that, when human resources (HR) asks us to restore a mailbox from two weeks ago, we can do it quickly," Nigel said. "Before, it would have taken hours of work."

In fact, the team can restore data 12x faster with Druva — easily meeting SLAs and facilitating Nigel's DR and BCP requirements for recovery. In addition, it's far simpler to locate data on a granular level. "Druva makes everything easier because we can go to a specific point in time," Nigel said. "With journaling, we had to trawl through reams of data to find what we needed."

Now, the team has 100% visibility of Microsoft Exchange data for staff across the globe, which helps it facilitate compliance with the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Singapore's Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA).

When the pandemic struck in 2020, the team enabled a seamless transition to remote working. "We had the right tools in place, like Druva, so employees could carry on as normal. Endpoints and Microsoft 365 data are secure and restorable, and this helps our team deliver a solid DR/BCP strategy," said Nigel.

Moving forward, Nigel's team is continuing to migrate the remaining on-premises infrastructure to the cloud. The team is moving away from roaming profiles in specific legacy operations and plans to deploy Druva across 1,500 more endpoints.