TAKE A BACKUP

Tranzman Product Development Update

In March we published our Tranzman development roadmap. It automates backup migrations and acts as a storage server so you can access backed-up data by converting its format when you restore or duplicate it. Here's a progress update.

Production-ready interface has been completed

The front and back end of Tranzman's database have been revamped, making it more robust. This will make it quicker and easier for us to integrate additional backup vendor products (origins and destinations) as transition engine plugins.

Backup Exec automated migration plugin

Backup Exec research is well under way and image readers and configuration converter processes are being tested. Prototype plugins have been created to extract and convert the workload configuration and image data from Backup Exec before converting it to NetBackup.

Tivoli Storage Manager (TSM) automated backup migration plugin

TSM readers and converters are being expanded to support additional data types, including Lotus Notes, Exchange and MSSQL.

Two Exciting Opportunities

We currently have a backup market investment opportunity – and need a new team member.

Investor: If you're an investor or a company with an interest in the backup market, and you're interested in accelerating the development timescales, please contact investments@stoneram.com.

Analysis assistance: Having created a framework along with a package of data files in raw format and as backup images, we are looking for skilled individuals to help determine how to extract the raw data from the backup images. The data formats of many of the backup images are based on well-known structures such as MTF and TAR. The objective is to extract the data, and (where applicable) any attributes/ACL/credential information stored in the backup image
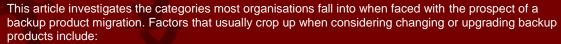
Monitor Our Progress

If you're unable to contribute, but would like to stay abreast of developments and aren't yet on our e-newsletter list, please email newsletter@stoneram.com and ask to be added.

Providing Tools To The Open Source Community

Stone Ram is indebted to the open source community for the information it's provided which has proved important to our research.

We'd like to give something back, so we are sharing tools we've created to speed up or improve the success rates of Stone Ram's services: we genuinely hope they'll benefit others. For details of the tools we are providing, please visit https://github.com/StoneRam/nbu_tools

EMPOWER THE MOVE

This article investigates the categories most organisations fall into when faced with the prospect of a backup product migration. Factors that usually crop up when considering changing or upgrading backup products include:

- Unease about legacy data conversion
- Reducing legacy product maintenance costs
- Retaining backup data for more than 12 months
- Backup data that is on legal hold.

The world of IT is constantly changing to keep up with the demands of businesses striving to improve efficiency or resiliency. As organisations adopt new technologies, the supporting IT infrastructure needs to be adapted to protect the new technologies. Most organisations fall into one of these groups.

The Anti-changers
Belief: They remain with a vendor because they believe that change will be painful and will disrupt the day-to-day business too *much*.
Result: The business suffers and becomes less competitive because it's not benefiting from modernisation, which delivers faster (and better) ways of protecting data, along with cost reductions and new efficiencies.

The Pick 'n' Mixers
Belief: They supplement their existing vendor with new technology (often from a new vendor) to provide any required additional functionality.
Result: In trying to meet specific business requirements, these organisations end up implementing multiple point solutions. Administration and maintenance costs increase, and resource usage becomes inefficient.

The Parallel Runners
Belief: They migrate to a new vendor and retain a smaller footprint of the legacy environment in case they have a need for recovery.
Result: Although this approach has its advantages, the legacy environment is expensive because it needs skilled resources, extra hardware, software licences and maintenance agreements.

The Manual Switchers
Belief: They migrate everything through a process of recovery and re-backup.
Result: This is time-consuming and requires many resources, although it does provide the opportunity to decommission the legacy environment after the migration has been successfully completed.

Six options for backup migration plans
There are six options to consider when planning a migration. Selecting the right one depends on various factors, including automation, volume of protected data, retentions and compliance.

1. Keep a smaller footprint of the legacy environment to use for restorations. This is an appealing choice if the volume of expected restores is very small and if staff have the skills to administer restores.
2. Decommission the legacy environment and pay for a third party to recover data if you need it. This is useful if the hardware can be reused because it allows for tapes to be sent off-site and the current environment to be decommissioned. This does not suit environments using disk-based backups. If a restore is required, a third party can recover it from tape and return the required files.
3. Retain the entire legacy environment until all data within it expires. This is a good option if the backup image retentions are short (<12 months) and hardware isn't going to be reused. The new environment can be configured for client workload creation. After backups start going to the new environment and the data in the old environment has expired, the new environment can be decommissioned.
4. Manually recover and re-backup data to move it from the legacy environment to the new one. This is time-consuming, and you lose the historical trail that's often needed for audit purposes and compliance.
5. Use a data management and migration tool. Most require third-party professional services to set them up and run, along with a separate engine to index the legacy backups. Some don't need legacy backup software to read data, so you need to find out if the legacy product can be decommissioned. Most use their own interface for restores – if you have to carry out a restore, you'll have to work out if data is old or new, and which interface to use. Most can script/automate image duplication to fully migrate them into the new backup environment, but this requires original media to be recalled and read before the new backup environment can re-backup the data. Until this process is complete, you will still use multiple catalogs.
6. Use the Tranzman backup transition manager appliance. It's a best-of-breed option that fully automates and manages the transition from the legacy backup to the new backup product. Legacy catalog data is automatically merged into the new environment, so all restores are performed using the native interfaces. You choose whether you want to automate client workload creation based on those (policies, jobs etc.) from the legacy environment. Tranzman converts images on demand, when you want to restore, and also schedules the duplication of all data and images into the new environment. Tranzman has its own image readers, so you can decommission the legacy backup software but still restore data when you need it.

SR stone ram