Case Study

GUILFORD, CONNECTICUT POLICE DEPARTMENT

Guilford, CT is located on the shoreline midway between New York and Rhode Island. The town, which is a combination residential and summer community, has a population of approximately 27,000 in an area of 47.6 square miles and is served by a 38-man police department.

THE BUSINESS NEED

As with virtually any town its size, the Guilford Police Department responds to thousands of calls every year, incidents ranging from simple fender-benders to serious criminal cases. Depending on its type and severity, law mandates that all police records pertaining to a given incident be kept on file for 10 years or more, perhaps indefinitely.

In Guilford, these records are stored on tape drives residing on one of the town's two IBM System i servers. After a series of tape drive failures resulted in the data file containing the police records being irretrievably corrupted, Sgt. Hank Lindgren, IT Manager for Guilford Police Department looked urgently to ensure that this event would never happen again.

Sgt. Lindgren started with a traditional disaster recovery solution, going to the department's existing tape backup system, copying data from the hard drive disks to tape. "That ended up being part of the problem, because the system tried to make a backup of a damaged object," says Sgt. Lindgren. He checked through the backup tapes and found that the only tape containing an uncorrupted version of the corrupted data file was from the day before the initial hard-drive crash. But the attempt to restore from that tape failed as well. The system had already attempted to make a backup from the more recent, albeit damaged object, so it recognized this uncorrupted version as "old" data.

Although the department did have printed hard-copies of the reports they are mandated by law to keep, Sgt. Lindgren says not having that information available, searchable and easily referenced electronically would have been catastrophic in terms of time, money and effort. "We would have been going from the computer age to 3x5 cards and lost a huge investigative tool, as well as the ability to reproduce the data for court."

THE OUTCOME

Fortunately, the department had *noMAX running on a second IBM System i server at an off-site location, and Sgt. Lindgren decided put *noMAX's remote journaling capabilities to the test. As it turned out, *noMAX passed with flying colors. "I was able to create a 'Save File' on the old System i box - the target box - where *noMAX had been journaling all the changes, which I FTP'd back to my source box," says Sgt. Lindgren. "And because *noMAX was journaling changes and not just copying the file, the file residing on the target box was clean and contained all the entries within 6 hours of my current time. Even if I had been able to restore from the traditional backup I would have lost 13 days worth of data."

*noMAX's performance also allayed Sgt. Lindgren's initial concern about restoring data from the older System i target box, running OS v5.2 to a newer source box, running OS v5.3. "Because *noMAX journalled the changes, my RMS software didn't care what version I was on so it was a relatively easy restore."

Given the criticality of the information Sgt. Lindgren is responsible for safeguarding, he finds it difficult to place a value on *noMAX's impact. "Had it not been for *noMAX we would have spent considerable time and money recovering the data, that's for sure," he says. " But it's just very comforting to know that it's working in the background, there if I need it. The more tools you have, the more ways you have to handle problems. For the police, it's handcuffs, a nightstick and firearm. For disaster recovery it's good to have a tool like *noMAX."

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Guilford, CT Police Department