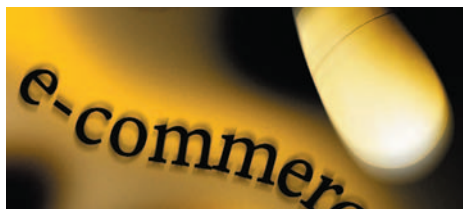


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Mainstar: Bringing reality to the concept of 24x7 storage and maintenance of data in the financial services sector

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24x7 is a much used and abused term, no more so than in the financial services sector, where there is a slightly misguided belief that markets never shut. Moreover, 24x7 is a headline expression, which conjures up a number of ideas.



In practice, the mechanisms and applications supporting these expressions belie the claim to be a 24x7 business. Where there is a real and literal 24x7 business requirement, Mainstar (www.mainstar.com), through its range of products and services, does provide permanent availability and cataloguing and capacity management of data, literally on a permanent 24x7 basis, as well as protecting its availability.

However, firstly consider some of the ideas which 24x7 conjures up and what they may mean in practice:

- "We never close"—may be literally true (but in practice it may mean that someone or some mechanism is available to log and record the details of the enquiry or transaction but cannot address the specific issue with immediacy).
- "We are always open for business"—may be correct (but it does not help if the market is not open or counter-parties are not available for transacting business).
- "We can execute a transaction any time of the day or night"—but we can only take your order and execute it when the markets open in a few hours time.
- "We can provide customers with transaction and account information at any time"—but the system is not available for the next 30 minutes or an hour while we complete day-end, week-end, month-end and year-end routines.
- "We are always available to handle customer business"—yes, but you will have to leave the details with us and we shall revert to you in a few hours time with an answer/confirmation because the systems are undergoing maintenance or other routines.

In many instances there is no need for literal 24x7 requirements. The enterprise seeks to present the availability of its broad service capability and extend its esteem for its customers, sometimes un-

necessarily and without thinking through the consequences for the business and the customers. Once they have opened themselves up to being a 24x7 service company, it is very difficult, not least for reputation and competition purposes, to revert back to a we close between... mode. They need to assess how they may satisfy the 24x7 demand in a very practical sense.

Equally, some prominent financial organisations must maintain, in the very literal sense, 24x7 up-time and 100% data availability, failing which their users' ability to conduct business is seriously impacted. This may have consequences for the measurements of the organisations' operational risk capabilities and capital requirements. In very extreme instances it may bring into question its corporate governance capabilities and ability to adhere to financial regulatory requirements.

It is critical that system administrators ensure that the enterprise's many different file servers, operating, maybe, around the globe, never fall below, for example, 20% available free space. The IT organisation needs a way to monitor these diverse servers at all times and to have the ability to react quickly with the appropriate actions when necessary.

Mainstar products provide solutions to these challenges:

Catalog RecoveryPlus (CR+) provides all the features and functions for optimum day-to-day management of the Integrated Catalogue Facility (ICF) environment. It ensures that all components of the ICF environment are safely backed up, ready for forward recovery if a critical failure occurs. CR+ provides powerful and fast diagnostic and repair facilities, which can regularly run to ensure ICF is clean and error-free at all times. CR+ is the new industry standard for ICF management. Mainstar's strategy for enhancements and updates for CR+ is designed to support 24x7 data access.

RealTime Defrag Extended Processing (RTD/XP) version 5.00. RTD/XP handles important data management tasks including de-fragmentation, unused space release and file extent consolidation. These are achieved in only one step. Efficient input/output (I/O) techniques assure optimal performance and applications that run in parallel are unaffected. RTD/XP is very flexible and easily tailored to the enterprise's environment. Its online reports enable simple monitoring, to ascertain how much space is saved and verify its optimal use. RTD/XP can reduce the costs related to space while increasing the effective capacity of direct access storage demands.

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