



Blacktown Workers Club Ltd.

Keeping Data Safe and Costs Down with Help from Symantec and Nexus IT



Founded in 1955, the Blacktown Workers Club is a five-story complex of cafes, sports facilities, function rooms, and a revolving restaurant that collectively host 1.2 million visitors a year. The Club's administration manages all this with a minimal IT budget, only one full-time admin—and help from Symantec partner Nexus IT. Using Symantec solutions, the Club meets its nightly six-hour backup window, eliminates 97.5 percent of spam, and has suffered no disruptions from malware in the past five years.

ORGANIZATION PROFILE

Founded in 1955, Blacktown Workers Club (www.workersclub.com.au) is a recreational, sporting, entertainment, and social center in Sydney, Australia. Run for the benefit of members, the main club boasts five floors of sporting and health facilities, four restaurants and a coffee shop, multiple function rooms and auditoriums. There are two other facilities - a sporting complex at Blacktown and a smaller club at Parramatta. The group has 240 employees and 55,000 members.

INDUSTRY

Non-Profit

SOLUTION

Data Protection

Business Continuity

Endpoint Security

Members benefit

Forget expensive country clubs in other countries! Membership in the Blacktown Workers Club in Sydney costs only 11.00 AUD (7.11 USD) a year. The club, which started in 1955, is operated for the benefit of members and their guests. It's a community onto itself, but also serves the greater community by sponsoring local sports teams, hosting disabled people at events and offering programs for local seniors.

In all, the club has five floors with multiple restaurants (including one of only three revolving restaurants in the area), gym and sports facilities, 240 employees and 55,000 members, all of which is supported by five servers and only one dedicated in-house IT staff member. The club's administrators are tasked with keeping IT expenses low, providing uninterrupted service to members, offering business continuity in case of technology issues, and keeping the network secure. Blacktown Workers Club is able to achieve these goals, with help from Symantec products and local Symantec partner Nexus IT & Communications Solutions.

Blacktown Workers Club first encountered Nexus IT about five years ago, after its email system abruptly stopped working. The email worked by dial-up over the Club's analog telephone system, and a switch to digital equipment unexpectedly disabled the email facility. "We did have a support company, but I was less than happy with them," recalls David Higgins, financial controller for the Club. "Their solution for our upgrade was way too expensive, and wouldn't have worked."

Higgins had read about Nexus IT in the local press, and found that they were able to get the Club's email up and running in two or three days. "That was a good introduction," he says. Soon, Nexus IT had replaced the Club's previous support company, and was providing a wide range of support and consulting for the Club.

That has allowed the Club to keep IT costs down, Higgins says. "Management doesn't pay much attention to IT because it works," he says. "So we tend to run on a bare minimum IT budget. Nexus IT allows us to do that."

“The Club opens at 9 a.m. and sometimes doesn't close until 3 a.m. So the fact that Backup Exec is quick gives us a backup process that is much less intrusive than our previous solution.”

David Higgins

Financial Controller
Blacktown Workers Club

Symantec Backup Exec completes nightly backups of 600-700 gigabytes in less than 6 hours.

A six-hour window

“One of the first thing David did was commission us for an audit,” says Sean Murphy, principal, Nexus IT & Communications Solutions. “One thing we found was that their backup solution didn’t meet government requirements.” As a membership association, the Club must meet stringent government requirements and provide detailed reports on its backups, he explains. “They didn’t have an IT budget in line with those sorts of requirements. That made it very easy to recommend Symantec Backup Exec, both so we would have our correct backups for compliance, but also could conveniently retrieve data in case of loss during any business day.”

In addition to Symantec Backup Exec™ 12.5 for Windows, Blacktown Workers Club uses Backup Exec Agent for Microsoft Exchange Server to enable granular recovery of individual messages in seconds—without multiple Exchange backups. The Backup Exec Agent for Microsoft SQL enables “hot” non-disruptive backups of that application. And Backup Exec open file protection enables files to be backed up even while they are in use. In addition, Backup Exec provides continuous data protection to ensure data changes are continuously backed up so the Club never loses critical data between nightly backups and recovery point objectives can be easily met.

Higgins is especially pleased that Symantec Backup Exec helps the Club meet the challenge of backing up 600-700 gigabytes of data each night during only a six-hour window. “The Club opens at 9 a.m. and sometimes doesn’t close until 3 a.m.,” Higgins says. “So the fact that Backup Exec is quick gives us a backup process that is much less intrusive than our previous solution.”

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SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

Key Challenges

- Reduce backup times
- Maintain low IT management costs
- Improve data protection
- Achieve compliance with government backup requirements
- Reduce spam
- Keep network safe from security threats

Solution

Improved data protection and shortened backup time; enhanced endpoint security; reduced spam

Symantec Products

- Symantec Backup Exec™ 12.5 for Windows® Servers with agents for Microsoft Exchange and Microsoft SQL
- Symantec™ Multi-Tier Protection Small Business Edition
- Symantec™ Endpoint Protection
- Symantec™ Mail Security for Microsoft Exchange
- Symantec™ Premium Antispam

Symantec Services

- Symantec Basic Maintenance Services

Symantec Partner

- Nexus IT & Communications Solutions (www.nexusnet.com.au)

Technology Environment

- Applications: Microsoft Exchange Server; gaming and cash register applications
- Databases: Microsoft SQL
- Servers: IBM® System p6 running AIX®; four HP ProLiant® ML370 and 350 G5 servers running Microsoft Windows Server 2003 and Microsoft Windows NT®
- Tape Library: Quantum Autoloader

BUSINESS VALUE AND TECHNICAL BENEFITS

Data Protection

- 600-700 gigabytes backed up within 6-hour nightly window
- 100% successful backups
- 100% successful restores
- Enhanced reliability through emailed status reports

Business Benefits

- Compliant with government backup requirements
- Vital database now protected
- 55,000 member operation supported by low IT budget

Security Improvements

- Approximately 97.5% of spam eliminated
- 5 years with no disruption from security breach

100 percent backup and restore success

Murphy reports that in the five years the Club has used Symantec Backup Exec, both backups and restores have been 100 percent successful. And the Backup Exec reporting features provide the information the Club needs to demonstrate its compliance with government data protection requirements. In addition, Backup Exec generates an automatic email report that lets both Higgins and Murphy monitor the success of backups.

And Backup Exec now helps the Club protect some information that's very important to the bottom line: its database of member guest identities. "Members can show a badge and enter the club," Higgins explains. "But if you're not a member, you have to identify yourself. So we scan a driver's license, rather than have them fill out a form and sign it. It takes a process that might take a minute and a half down to 30 seconds."

That may not sound like much of a difference, but with 1.2 million visits a year, queues can form quickly while impatient visitors wait to fill out forms. "In terms of high traffic, we really see that database as a key enabler of the business," Murphy says.

Five years, no disruptions

At a recommendation from Nexus IT, the Club also implemented Symantec™ Endpoint Protection five years ago, at around the same time it installed Backup Exec. "Symantec Endpoint Protection is a most excellent security tool because you can see from one management console which endpoints have the current protection. We can get the on-site IT administrator to remediate a computer if there are any challenges with it." Thanks to that visibility, he says, the Club has experienced no malware-related disruptions during the five years the solution has been in place.

"There are some sophisticated blended threats coming through," he adds. "But we're very confident because we can see from the console which boxes have been prevented from updating by a blended threat."

About three years ago the Club expanded Symantec Endpoint Protection to a Symantec™ Multi-Tier Protection Small Business Edition license, which includes Symantec™ Mail Security for Microsoft Exchange on its gateway, and a Symantec Premium Antispam subscription. Symantec™ Premium Antispam cuts down dramatically on the quantity of spam Club employees have to deal with, Higgins reports. Users

get between zero and two spam messages a day, compared with 40 or 50 if the solution wasn't in place—a reduction of about 97.5 percent.

All in all, Murphy says, Symantec is an important ally in helping Blacktown Workers Club maintain a safe and well protected environment, despite its bare-bones IT budget. "To provide high-quality support for a low budget, you require a good tool set. It's the only way," he says. "If you've got the best tool set, then you can let the tools do their job, and report what they've done. And then we can look over the system to make sure everything is in order. Symantec has the best products on the market for achieving that."