

Designed for non-stop computing by protecting the current software image and essential data files on each system.



Managing the Retail Store

Xpoint Technologies pioneered Managed Recovery solutions for Windows® desktop, mobile and server computer systems. Designed to perform in environments limited to no onsite IT staff such as remote locations and branch offices, Xpoint's Managed Recovery provides a non-stop computing environment for essential computers that run critical software applications.

Most computer support issues are caused by un-predictable software glitches that may result from software image corruption. When this occurs, resolution to these problems can take 30 minutes, several hours and even days. This results in loss of revenue due to reduced employee productivity, sacrificed customer service and the temporary inability to perform computer transactions.

Most retail stores are without IT resources and employees are novice computers. Store Managers who report the problems may be unable or not allowed to troubleshoot problems themselves. This combination makes remotely managing and troubleshooting support incidents difficult. If the problem cannot be solved by corporate IT, an onsite service technician is often required to solve the problem.

Characteristics

Retail store and remote locations maintain the following characteristics:

- Stores are tied into corporate via dial up, DSL, satellite and other forms of high speed communications
- Corporate IT remotely manages and updates the store infrastructure over the WAN, VPN or Internet
- The store server or host may be polled each day for transaction logs, sales records, inventory and time and attendance logs
- The stores are always on
- Corporate IT performs scheduled system maintenance to the hardware and software applications
- Onsite break / fix is outsourced to a managed service provider
- The stores can operate independently of each other
- Critical transaction logs and sales records are retrieved and input into corporate databases daily.

The Retail Store is Finely Tuned Environment

The retail stores are high volume businesses that operate to specification – at finely tuned tolerance levels. There is a standard operating procedure that governs all operations of all stores. Most retail stores are 'always on' or are open during extended hours to serve the public. During regular store hours, the Point of Sale Systems are always on and are 'customer ready'. While the store is closed, corporate IT performs scheduled system maintenance to the hardware and software applications. Due to the wide distribution of stores, corporate traditionally purchases a multi-year service provider for onsite repair. In the event that a repair or onsite service is required, a service technician will be dispatched and onsite to fix the problem with a certain period of time.

Common IT Management Problems

Real Problems

For retail stores and remote locations, the following problems are common.

-
- Hardware and software corruptions damage the software image on the systems
- There is no onsite IT
- Remotely troubleshooting problems is time intensive
- Help desk may not be able to remotely troubleshoot problems through the firewall.
- Untrained users may accidentally delete files

Software Image Corruption

Unfortunately, it is not possible to foresee and plan for all problems that arise in the field. The retail store environment is very different than a controlled environment with a high degree of planning and fault tolerant systems. Too many unplanned and unforeseeable events occur in the field.

This is especially true in the case of hardware failures, power spikes and surges, lack of maintenance, software application conflicts, database corruptions and user related errors. Problems may also occur when remotely deploying fix packs, patches, service packs, updates and upgrades. Even with a thorough amount of vendor, beta and customer testing, there is always the risk of corruption when a software update or upgrade is deployed into a remote environment.

Exposure to the Business

In such cases, the result is a corrupted software image. When an image becomes corrupted, it may result in a permanent degradation of the Windows operating system and critical store applications. The condition may not be repairable and could require a reload of a fresh software image on the system.

When support incidents such as this occur, the most common solution is to dispatch an onsite service technician to troubleshoot and solve the problem. Additional costs are incurred averaging \$200-\$500 per incident. Not to mention other associated costs including store downtime, a drop in customer service and in the worst case – loss of revenue (store transactions).

More and more businesses find it unacceptable to wait a day or several days for problem resolution. Recovery of a system is thought of in terms of minutes, rather than hours or even days. The only reliable alternative is to restore the correct software image – immediately!

Current Problem Resolution

Remote Management

As a first line of defense, resolution of support problems requires the IT Administrator to remotely dial in and troubleshoot the problem. For the problems that cannot be resolved, it is necessary to send a service technician onsite.

Last Resort Solutions

As a last resort, the IT Administrator has two choices to solve problems. In both cases, these are the least desirable due to cost.

- Send a technician onsite to solve the problem
- Replace the inoperable system with a new one.

Managed Recovery Solutions

Together, Rapid Restore solutions provide Managed Recovery that seamlessly integrates with any corporate Business Continuity plan. Business recovery policies can be easily extended down to each computer—from corporate headquarters to each desktop. All of these features and benefits can translate into conservation of IT staff resources as well as reduced downtime for end users—savings that can help virtually any company improve the bottom line.

Managed Recovery solutions can be remotely managed and will run without any onsite IT intervention. To solve the common problems, the solutions will perform up-to a complete restore of a system within the hour.

Managed Recovery Benefits

Managed Recovery solutions in the retail store provide the following benefits.

- Restore a system, even if the hard drive or complete system has been replaced
- In the event of a software corruption, remotely restore a computer within 15-20 minutes
- Protect store transaction data
- Remotely access the site through a secure HTML browser
- Receive system management alerts via pager or email

Managed Recovery Solutions

The Managed Recovery solution family includes:

- Rapid Restore PC
- Rapid Restore Pro
- Rapid Restore Enterprise
- Server Edition
- Web Manager

Rapid Restore PC:

- Fast, diskette-less recovery from a hidden, service partition
- Easy to use, automatic backup and recovery solution for all users
- Up to 2 levels of recovery by the computer user and 3 levels by IT Administrator
- Restore a PC, even Windows won't run, within 15–20 minutes
- Selectively restore a single file
- Create custom Recovery CD RW's and Archive Data

Rapid Restore Pro:

- Expand diskette-less recovery to a 2nd drive within your computer
- Provide full redundancy when your primary drive fails
- Backup and recover applications that run databases including Microsoft® Outlook®, Exchange®, Access®, SQL Server® and other similar database applications.

Rapid Restore Enterprise:

- Eliminate risk associated with lost, stolen or damaged laptops
- Fast, diskette-less recovery over the network
- Completely restore a computer – even in the event of hard drive and hardware replacements
- Transparent daily, weekly, or monthly archives of your system and user data to the Rapid Restore Enterprise appliance.

Server Edition

- Eliminate the need for on site IT personnel
- Reduce recovery time to within an hour
- Fast, diskette-less recovery from service partition of each drive
- Up to 5 levels of recovery by Admin
- Selectively restore a single file

Web Manager

- Remotely troubleshoot any branch office computer
- Completely restore the computer to a set of known good images

Managed Recovery Scenarios

In the case of a user-induced error, crashed or in-operable system, the mobile computer can restore the system within 15 to 20 minutes. The following are examples.

Corrupt Operating System

Problem: The Operating System has been corrupted due to an application installation. The system has 'blue screened' and Windows will not load.

Solution: The IT Administrator performs a complete restore from the HTML Support Console and recovers to the last backup.

1. The store manager calls help desk and reports the problem
2. The IT Admin logs on to the HTML Support Console and selects the troubled client
The IT Admin selects Remote F11 System Recovery option based upon labeled recovery options.
Example A, B, or C.
3. Rapid Restore Enterprise performs a Bare Metal Restore by:
 - a. Waking up the system
 - b. Performing a pre-OS restore and post-OS restore
 - c. And reboots the system

Software Corruption

Problem: The software image has been corrupted due to a service pack upgrade.

Solution: The IT Administrator performs a restore from the HTML Support Console and recovers to the last backup.

1. The store manager calls help desk and reports the problem
2. The IT Admin logs on to the HTML Support Console and selects the troubled client
The IT Admin selects Remote F11 System Recovery option based upon labeled recovery options.
Example A, B, or C.
3. Rapid Restore Enterprise performs a Normal Restore by:
 - a. Restoring a post-OS backup image

Conclusion

Managed Recovery is Strategic

When the software image has become corrupted, today's solution of manually troubleshooting problems over the WAN is time consuming and not very effective. Due to the constant pressure to lower costs,

drive more value to the customer and meet quarterly expectations, IT must provide better solutions to these problems. Through the use of Xpoint solutions, corporate IT can manage each store, while establishing an image management strategy for systems managed in the field. Providing remote image management and recovery operations means that the corporate IT Administrator can remotely reset and reload a system – to the correct software image – for each system, at every store. Consequently, last resort solutions may be reduced. While out tasking is only required for break-fix operations.

For More Information

For more information about Xpoint's Managed Recovery Solutions, please refer from the contact information below

For information via the World Wide Web	www.xpointdirect.com
For additional purchasing information	www.xpointdirect.com/Sitelet/Sitelet.asp
For product information by telephone	(561) 241-8447

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