

## Hitachi Storage Solutions at Work

### Accident Exchange

**INDUSTRY** Services: Automotive

**SOLUTIONS** **Enterprise Platform, Replication, Tiered Storage**  
**Hardware** — Hitachi Universal Storage Platform™ V (2)  
**Software** — Hitachi TrueCopy® Synchronous, Hitachi ShadowImage® Heterogeneous Replication, Hitachi Copy-on-Write Snapshot and Hitachi Protection Manager software; Hitachi Data Protection Suite, powered by CommVault®  
**Services** — Provided by Hitachi TrueNorth Channel Partners Zycko and RSI Technologies, Inc.



“As a rapidly scaling business in need of a dual site disaster recovery plan, we needed high performance storage to provide maximum reliability and scalability. With Hitachi technology, we have achieved this and more.”

*Ray Ford  
Chief Technology Officer  
Accident Exchange*

**accident  
eXchange**

# Accident Exchange Ensures Failsafe Growth with Storage and Software from Hitachi Data Systems

Industry leading accident management service provider Accident Exchange needed a foolproof disaster recovery plan and scalable storage infrastructure to support its rapidly expanding business. With a dual centre enterprise solution comprising the Hitachi Universal Storage Platform™ V and software, including Hitachi Protection Manager, the company has ensured it meets compliance demands and empowered its staff to deliver optimal customer service.

With a fleet of more than 6,000 luxury, prestige and commercial vehicles, Accident Exchange provides the security of accident management services for over three million drivers subscribed to its Accident Aftercare service.

Organic growth has taken the company from its formation in 2001 to its present size of over 720 people and exclusive, long standing trading relationships in excess of 1,300 affiliates ranging from automotive manufacturers to fleet management and insurance companies. Its current call centre is manned 12 hours a day and receives 10 to 12 calls per minute.

## Business Growing, Applications Slowing

This sustained expansion caused rapidly increasing data volumes, and the company's midrange storage system was nearing full capacity, causing application performance to slow. In particular, the internally developed application running Accident Exchange's core business operations began to suffer, impacting on the speed with which Accident Exchange could resolve customer enquiries. If left to continue, this would start to affect customer service levels.

The rapid scaling of the business also meant that growing numbers of customers and larger data volumes warranted an enterprise storage solution to replace the midrange

system currently in place. Accident Exchange Chief Technology Officer Ray Ford had developed a plan to move from a busy single site IT infrastructure to a fully replicated dual site model to improve the company's disaster recovery capabilities.

"Being regulated by the Financial Services Authority, we have additional responsibilities to protect the data we hold. For this reason we need a comprehensive disaster recovery plan, including failsafe measures to ensure the security and integrity of our data," Ford comments.

Accident Exchange was looking to set up a disaster recovery site in Coleshill, several miles from its primary data centre site in Birmingham. The ultimate aim of this new structure was to enable Accident Exchange to failover different parts of the architecture without users noticing. This would enable the company to seamlessly continue operations should an emergency compromise data at the primary Birmingham site.

## A Holistic Solution

After in-depth research into possible solutions, Ford and his team worked with long term technology partner RSI and international distributor Zycko to isolate two solutions that fit the brief. A proposal from Hitachi Data Systems and one other were then fully tested in a controlled environment to determine which would best meet Accident Exchange's needs. While both systems performed well, the Hitachi Data Systems solution came in at a lower price point and provided a better administrative platform, which the team believed would pay dividends over time.

The Hitachi Data Systems solution included two Universal Storage Platform V systems, each with 30TB of capacity. Hitachi True-Copy® Synchronous software addressed remote replication needs while Hitachi ShadowImage® Heterogeneous Replication software provided a nondisruptive, host-independent data replication solution for creating copies within a single Hitachi storage system and Hitachi Copy-on-Write Snapshot provided logical snapshot data replication for immediate use in decision

support, software testing and development, data backup or rapid recovery operations. Hitachi Data Protection Suite, powered by CommVault®, provided a unified approach for easy, automated and low cost data management, enabling easier accommodation of Accident Exchange's small backup windows.

In order to fulfil Accident Exchange's IT strategy that key skills are held in house, Accident Exchange needed to not only complete the data migration itself, but also be highly involved in the installation and testing, so Hitachi Data Systems provided training to two of the IT team to enable them to complete the project in house.

Accident Exchange's 12 hour days, six days per week, left very small windows for migrating application data to the new platform. While only moving data during out-of-office hours has led to extended project completion times, the safety and integrity of all this critical information has been assured. As Ford says, "The business has absolutely no idea that we

**"When we tested the Hitachi system, it proved very easy to manage, which has given us the freedom to migrate data ourselves. This is critical as Financial Services Authority regulation requires us to ensure data integrity ourselves."**

Ray Ford  
Chief Technology Officer  
Accident Exchange

are making any changes and this is how it needs to be. We are now able to run failovers to the Coleshill data centre, without our application users seeing any change in application performance, laying the groundwork for our business continuity plan."

The reliability of the Universal Storage Platform V systems has been critical to achieving this. The business has experienced 100 percent uptime since the installation and response times have improved dramatically, meaning Accident Exchange operators can process customer requests quickly and deal efficiently with the many calls received each day.

The new storage infrastructure gives the business the capacity it needs to continue its rapid expansion and the highly scalable infrastructure will allow Accident Exchange to build its business without worrying about replacing technology for years to come.

The ease of managing the storage environment and data migration through the Hitachi software has given Accident Exchange the flexibility to optimise the infrastructure itself. The team has tiered the storage environment to prioritise applications delivering relevant data to customer-facing staff, ensuring each customer is dealt with as quickly and effectively as possible.

## Testing the Limits

The development of the first stage of the disaster recovery solution is almost complete and when the last of the data has been migrated, Ford and his team have plans to ensure it is watertight by running a series of automated failover tests.

The next phase of the disaster recovery process is to reduce the possibility of human error by scripting failover and fallback scenarios using a combination of Hitachi software such that services can be run simultaneously at both sites and data is kept protected using bi-directional replication.

Ford concludes, "As well as improving our performance times, Hitachi Data Systems has provided us with the ideal foundation for a comprehensive Business Continuity Plan. We are impressed with what we have achieved so far and we're looking to build on this in the coming years."

## Zycko

Zycko is a value-add distributor of best-in-class convergent IT infrastructure solutions through a channel of resellers, systems integrators and service providers.

Zycko is privately held and has been profitable since inception in 2000, when the company's original charter was to market data networking accessories to resellers as a wholesale distributor. Zycko now employs 250 staff, serving over 3,000 resellers around the world from 13 offices on four continents. The company enjoys an annual turnover of more than \$180 million.

Zycko's provision of best-in-class IT products and logistics management is supported by true value-add professional services, such as pre-sales expertise, technical support, custom configuration, an industry leading accredited training program and marketing support. These vital services and support enable Zycko customers to quickly deliver profits and invest in new market opportunities, allowing them to differentiate in a crowded market. Zycko is the channel partner of choice.

## RSI

RS International provides innovative, proven solutions, which are simple and effective to deploy and administer in order to help its customers reduce IT ownership costs.

RSI is very much aware of the cost of ownership, and constantly seeking ways to reduce cost by investing in new technologies.

RSI promotes innovators, both large and small; companies such as Hitachi Data Systems, Cisco, Riverbed, Huawei, Comm Vault, USystems, Dell, Epicentre, MGE and StoreAge/LSI.

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