



Databarracks' case study

FAST-GROWING ENERGY PROVIDER SAVES TIME WITH BACKUP AS A SERVICE

About Vital Energi

Vital Energi designs, operates, manages and maintains energy centres across the UK. It provides centralised energy to large developments, including the new residential development of Battersea Power Station, with the intention of reducing its customers' carbon footprints. It employs 530 people in its two offices in Blackburn and London, with engineers delivering projects across the UK.

The Challenge

Vital Energi relies on a range of systems, including System Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) to support its energy centres. The company guarantees to reduce customers' carbon footprints and energy bills. To prove this saving, its data needs to be protected and available, should a disaster occur.

Jon Woan is Vital Energi's Group IT Manager. He manages a team of four, working on application development and operations. This small team is responsible for guaranteeing the smooth-running of Vital Energi's infrastructure and security of its data.

"We needed to shift the burden of backing up data. We knew we could outsource, but we needed someone with a stable, reliable backup platform that's going to work for us. I need companies to partner with who can bring value to the business areas where we need support.

"I can't afford to put masses of storage in our Blackburn site. Doing this internally would be a waste of time and not a valuable use of the CapEx."

Before Databarracks, Vital Energi had a very basic solution that relied on manual input. "We had between 20 and 30 sites, using basic applications. We had a local presence and an installation in the data centre. We would then run synchronisations of the data from each site. It's not what I'd class as a backup – it was a very labour intensive process of running scripts and copying into our data centre."

The problem was the solution took up a lot of the team's time. "Although it wasn't perfect, it was cheap and initially, it worked. As we grew however, it became clear it wasn't scalable. My pain was being caused by the administration time. We needed to partner with a company that managed the day-to-day admin of the backup but were also available 24/7 if we had a disaster. That's where Databarracks came in."

The Solution

Vital Energi gave Databarracks a set of SLAs for protecting its infrastructure. If Jon needs to be alerted to any issues, the Databarracks team get in contact immediately.

“Databarracks protect all systems and hardware down to a bare metal level. That’s important because when we need to recover, our engineers don’t have to rebuild the machine from scratch and that saves time. If any of our machines were to fall-down, I don’t need to send a specialist to the site. We can get a spare machine up, I call my dedicated Databarracks team and they carry out the restore. It’s not a painful process of having to reinstall it. Because Databarracks looks after everything on the bottom end, it makes bringing that data back incredibly easy.”

This is key for Vital Energi as a business. “If we can’t prove the costs we save, we can’t prove our USP to the customer.

So making sure we have maximum uptime is extremely important. If there is an issue, we have a service that can get us back and up and running as quickly as possible.”

The Benefits

As Jon says, “What sets Databarracks apart is the managed service. If something isn’t working well or something hasn’t been backed up, they’re going to tell me about it. One of my operations guys doesn’t have to spend all morning logging onto every dashboard to make sure it’s completed.

“The model where I pay for how much I use is a massive advantage. And it helps that all of our information is kept in the UK.”

This made it easy to pitch Databarracks to the decision makers at Vital Energi. “Anyone who’s been through the pain of procurement knows it’s challenging. But it was easy to walk into a meeting with the C-Suite and pitch Databarracks.

“I could immediately say Databarracks had the expertise and resource to manage multiple sites, and all the certifications to prove it’s a service we can rely on.

“The model where I pay for how much I use is a massive advantage.”

“Because we’re dealing with organisations like hospitals, trusts and authorities – and backing up their critical data - they want that information to be ultra-secure. Databarracks alleviates those fears.”

“I had a problem, they’ve now solved it. They wrap everything up in a nice managed service and feel like an extension of my team.

“We’re now reviewing our critical applications to see where Databarracks can add further value.”

Looking forward

Jon and his team can now look to the future. “We’re growing quickly and taking on additional sites, so we need to handle that increasing workload. My critical issue was dealing with our remote sites. I now have peace of mind there, so I can look at other sites we want to do more with.

“Databarracks have proven themselves with their current service – now we’re investigating how best to protect our data centres.”

About Databarracks

Databarracks is the UK’s specialist business continuity and IT disaster recovery provider.

In 2003, we launched one of the world’s first true managed backup services to bring indestructible resilience to mission critical data.

Today, we deliver award winning data and continuity services from some of the most secure data centres in the world, 30 metres below ground in ex-military nuclear bunkers, supported 24/7/365 by our team of handpicked experts.

We make enterprise-class continuity, security and resilience accessible for organisations of all sizes.

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