

Eddy Group reduces backup time so users have greater system access



Highlights

- **The Challenge**
Plumbing and electrical supply company needed to cut backup window
- **The Solution**
IBM 3581 Ultrium Tape Autoloader and IBM @server iSeries Model 820
- **The Benefit**
Significantly reduced backup time and increased system uptime, which enables branches to expand business hours

Founded in the late 1800s, the Eddy Group was originally comprised of a sawmill, finishing mill, flour mill, millwork shop, and carriage shop. In the 1950s, the New Brunswick-based Eddy Group shifted gears and is now primarily involved with the sale and distribution of plumbing and electrical supplies to both consumers and contractors. With seven branches in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, revenue for the Eddy Group was nearly \$50 million in 2000. Consistent with its century-old heritage, the company is focused on providing customers the best service possible. To do this, the Eddy Group implements the latest technologies available.

Ultrium Tape Autoloader cuts backup time

John Sullivan, Eddy Group CIO, continually strives to improve the company's IT processes and needed a device that would reduce backup time and boost system uptime. This involved upgrading the IBM AS/400® server and dual IBM 7208 External 8 mm tape drive used for backup. At that time, the daily backup process took two hours and 15 minutes.

“I’ve worked with IBM products for over three decades and I keep coming back to IBM based on their outstanding products and level of support.”

- John Sullivan
Eddy Group CIO

Sullivan has been in the IT industry for 33 years and, based on his past experience working with IBM, believes strongly in IBM products. So when Sullivan started researching tape storage devices to replace the tape drive, he immediately looked to IBM. The IBM

3581 Ultrium Tape Autoloader was just being introduced at the time and he decided to go with it.

Sullivan based his decision primarily on price, quality, and reliability. He had no idea, though, that the new Ultrium Tape Autoloader would perform as well as it did. "We wanted more speed than we had, but this is astounding," he says. "Now, a daily backup takes about five minutes—down from over two hours. Since we also installed an @server iSeries™ about the same time as the tape autoloader, many people thought the decreased backup window came from the server. But we found that the majority of the decrease is, in fact, due to the tape autoloader."

As an added bonus, Sullivan found that the day-end batch processing time has also been significantly diminished as a result of the new iSeries speed. The Eddy Group's batch processing involves tasks, such as inventory reports, stock replenishment, and accounting, that must be executed during non-business hours. In total, the company's previous backup and batch processing took nearly eight hours each night. The installation of the new server and tape autoloader reduced that time to a mere 35 minutes. Now, the Eddy Group has seven additional business hours each day.

In addition to price, performance, quality, and reliability, Sullivan also chose the tape autoloader based on IBM's level of support. "IBM not only has a reputation for innovation, but also has a very good history of supporting older versions of products—IBM is much better than other manufacturers," Sullivan

maintains. "I know that we can count on IBM support."

Tape autoloader provides scalability and increased uptime

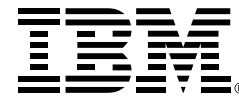
The new tape autoloader gives the Eddy Group a great deal of room to expand. While the old tape drive could store up to 14 GB of compressed data per drive, the new autoloader can store as much as 1.4 TB of compressed data. "I am only backing up 6.5 GB on a 200 GB tape, so we have lots of room to grow," Sullivan confirms. The tape autoloader can handle seven tapes, whereas the old tape drive could only handle one tape at a time. The availability of multiple tape slots eliminates the need to replace the tape on a daily basis and, since the Eddy Group also backs up on weekends, no one has to come in to change the tape.

On top of that, the greatly reduced backup time no longer conflicts with business hours. "Some people want to work until midnight—now they can do that without experiencing system downtime due to backups," Sullivan asserts, "and employees can also come in early to serve customers who need supplies early in the morning. Before, we didn't have that luxury." The result is expanded business hours each day.

Eddy Group has future plans to work with IBM

To keep up with competition, the Eddy Group makes every effort to stay abreast of new technologies and plans to work with IBM on several new projects well into the next decade. Sullivan has a three phase IT plan in place. The first phase involved the server upgrade and implementation of the new backup device.

Sullivan will now begin investigating the second phase, which involves installing another server for high-speed Internet access and e-commerce capabilities. The third phase of Sullivan's plan is still being solidified, but will likely involve wireless technology. "I've worked with IBM products for over three decades, and I keep coming back to IBM based on their outstanding products and level of support," Sullivan says. "We will be with IBM for a long time."



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