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High Availability - What is it and why do you need it?

Ensuring great benefits such as maximum uptime and zero data loss, HA is a top priority for Fairfax Imaging.

An unexpected loss of data can be devastating to any business. According to a study by Pepperdine University in 2003, "data loss costs U.S. businesses more than \$18 billion each year. The most common forms of loss are hardware failure, human error, software corruption, and computer viruses." Even though organizations take precautions and have backup plans and disaster recovery plans in place, most of these data backup methods are not reliable.

Today's technologies must provide many options for High Availability (HA). The availability of faster and better performing hardware, faster network and Internet connections, and virtualization platforms such as VMware make HA deployment much easier and cost-effective. Not long ago the cost of HA was too high for most enterprises who were trying to find a balance between cost and performance, system availability and security. The evolution of HA in the past couple of years has changed that.

HA solutions attempt to eliminate any single point of failure, whether it's hardware or software, through the use of redundant hardware and operating systems capable of providing HA features. Enterprises with critical applications and data

cannot afford the cost of any downtime; therefore, the need to invest in HA technologies is vital to the success of any IT operation. Having a HA infrastructure in place allows Application and Database Servers to failover to secondary servers within the HA infrastructure.

Here's a list of commonly used hardware and software within a typical HA infrastructure:

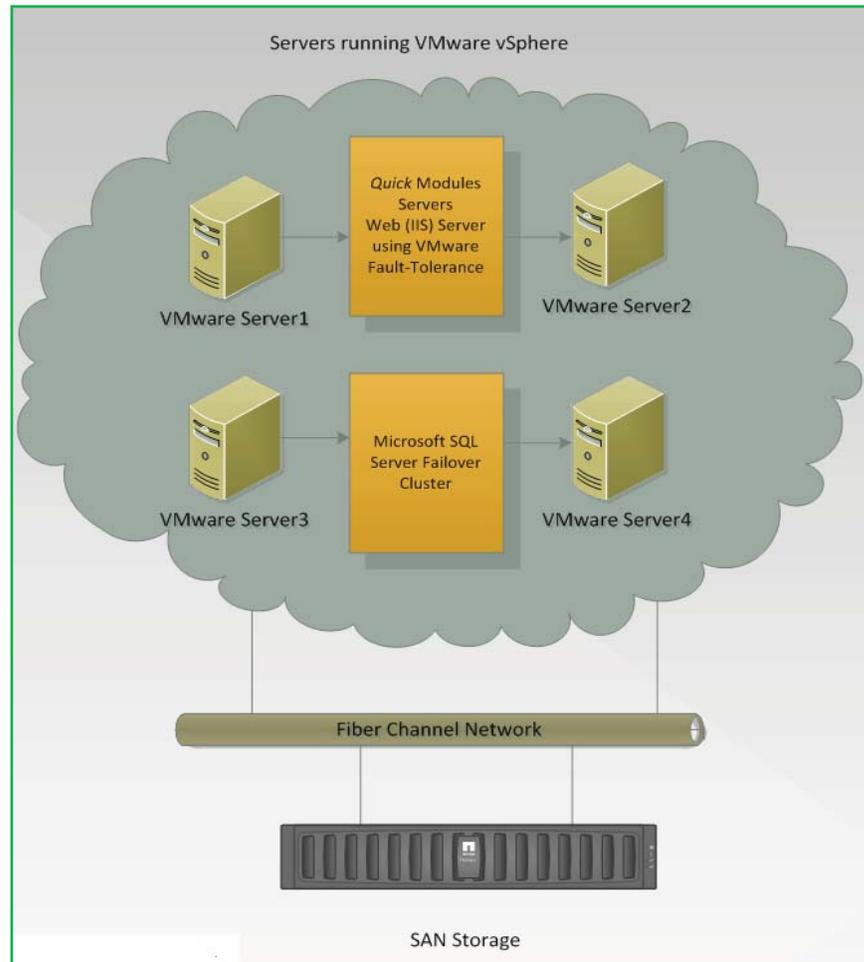
HARDWARE:

- Servers
- Network Switches & Routers
- SAN Storage
- Load Balancers

SOFTWARE:

- HA Features such as VMware HA and Fault Tolerance
- Microsoft Cluster Service
- Data Replication Services

Fairfax Imaging's client-server architecture is very flexible and can be configured to take advantage of many HA solutions available. The result is a robust solution that provides continuous operation with zero data loss and zero downtime. An example of HA architecture is shown in the figure below. Servers running VMware are connected to a shared storage such as a SAN.



Server Failure Does Not Result In Data Loss

VMware's Fault-Tolerance (FT) allows virtual servers to continue to operate even when there's a physical server failure. This is possible since VMware mirrors the virtual server on to another physical server part of the server farm and immediately picks up where the primary server left off. This eliminates any downtime or data loss.

In a typical VMware FT system in action, a minimum of two nodes (VMware servers) and shared storage (SAN) are required to support VMware Fault-Tolerance. This is what Fairfax Imaging implements at its client sites. Additional servers can be added to improve HA. When Fault-Tolerance is enabled on a Virtual Machine (VM), it creates a second VM that mirrors the primary VM on a second physical server.

HA solutions are in great demand in today's society. For businesses, they reduce or eliminate the additional cost associated with downtime of critical applications and data, provide continuous operation, and facilitate disaster recovery efforts, if necessary. Taking advantage of cloud computing introduces new challenges to a business. Fairfax Imaging is using the most up-to-date HA solutions to provide security for our clients' data, and the fastest access to that data.



Customer Cloud Service - In Testing!

As previously announced in our last newsletter, Fairfax Imaging continues the development of a central “cloud” information transfer service for our customers. Our engineers are working diligently on this important tool and it is now in the testing phase!

Soon, we’ll begin our beta testing with select customers. We look forward to offering this important service that will provide secure data transmissions to and from our customers in an easy to use manner. We will keep you posted on its progress!



Fairfax Imaging exhibited at the 2011 FTA Technology Conference in Denver in August and had a great time meeting all the attendees! We want to thank you if you stopped by to chat with us and hope you learned more about Fairfax’s ability to process remittance and tax forms quickly and efficiently. Our tax remittance program is currently in use at several government entities around the country, including the State of Maine, Montana Dept. of Revenue, Kansas Dept. of Revenue, and the West Virginia State Treasury Office. If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact our Sales staff.

New Employees At Fairfax - Welcome Aboard!

Fairfax Imaging is pleased to announce that we have added new employees in the past year to better serve our customers. Let’s find out a bit more about them.

Ed Harris, Software Support Engineer, is a graduate of Full Sail University in Winter Park, Florida. Ed is very knowledgeable in the programming languages and techniques used in Quick Modules, Fairfax Imaging’s document processing software. He is well-versed in assisting our clients with any technical questions they may have.

Jeremy Thompson, Software Support Engineer, is also a graduate of Full Sail University in Winter Park, Florida. While a programmer at Multimedia Games in Texas, he worked on updating many established software gaming programs. Jeremy is tasked with assisting our clients with successfully operating Quick Modules.

Maryellen Noad, Project Manager, brings many years of IT and software experience to Fairfax Imaging, managing system implementations for firms such as Moffitt Cancer Center and Gentiva Health Services. She is a Virginia Tech alum and possesses her master’s degree from Boston University. Maryellen is currently managing the Wellcare, American Cancer Society, and Georgia Department of Labor projects for Fairfax Imaging.

Gary Zelenka, Trainer, comes to Fairfax with rich experience in training thousands of people on both new software and hardware. Having previously worked for IDS and Danka in St. Petersburg, Florida, and Perot Systems in Arlington, Virginia, Gary possesses the knowledge and skill set necessary to train new Fairfax clients on our many Quick Modules programs. He holds a B.S. from LSU and his master’s degree is from the University of New Orleans.

Stephanie Salerno, Senior Proposal Writer, has been working for software firms in the Tampa Bay area for many years in

various capacities. Her bachelor’s degree is from Penn State and her master’s degree is from Murray State. Formerly employed by SCC, Sterling Research Group, and AnyDoc Software, Stephanie brings many years experience in technical writing, software training, video production and scripting, and marketing end-user software.



Front: Stephanie Salerno, Maryellen Noad, Jeremy Thompson
Back: Ed Harris, Gary Zelenka

Don’t forget! Fairfax Imaging, Inc. has a new address:

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