

S U C C E S S S T O R Y

# Hitachi Storage Solutions at Work

## Voyages Hotels and Resorts

**INDUSTRY** Services: Travel and Tourism

**SOLUTIONS** Consolidation/Simplification and Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery

- Hardware** — Hitachi Adaptable Modular Storage 500
- Software** — Hitachi ShadowImage® Replication software and Hitachi TrueCopy® Remote Replication software
- Services** — Provided by Commander



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*Greg Hucker  
IT&T General Manager  
Voyages Hotels and Resorts*



# Hitachi Data Systems Packs Up Storage Problems at Voyages Hotels and Resorts

An Australian travel company specialising in experienced-based holidays in wilderness locations, including Ayers Rock, Queensland, the Kimberley and Tasmania, Voyages Hotels and Resorts manages tailored eco-tourism and cultural experiences of individual guests spread across more than 1700 hotel rooms, campgrounds and lodges. To meet the challenges of administering these wide-ranging holidays, Voyages turned to Hitachi Data Systems for the sophisticated information technology systems and processes they needed.

As one of Australia's premier resort operators, Voyages runs a portfolio of hotels located in some of the most spectacular wilderness areas the country has to offer. Voyages' hotel destinations range from Queensland reefs and rainforests, to desert properties in the Northern Territory, mountain settings in Tasmania and vast unspoiled tracts of the Kimberley in Western Australia.

Voyages has pioneered a unique brand of experienced-based holidays focused on giving guests incredible, memorable experiences that they would not be able to enjoy anywhere else in Australia. But the very thing that makes Voyages holiday properties so appealing — the remote, idyllic locations of its hotels

and resorts — also presents the company's IT specialists with their biggest challenges.

To improve senior management visibility of the day-to-day operation of each resort, and to reduce both the complexity of its technology and the risk to the business of an IT failure, Voyages has centralised much of their IT operations by leveraging storage area network (SAN) technology.

In the past, regional communications challenges and the remote nature of the Voyages properties meant each resort was forced to be largely independent in managing their IT requirements. The decentralised operation could not support a full-time IT professional at each location. Business-critical tasks, like

managing the data backup process, packaging daily transactions for guests, and the overnight resetting of systems for a fresh start in the morning, were being performed by general staff.

This decentralised structure presented a variety of challenges and potential risks. It also meant senior management at Voyages headquarters in Sydney had poor visibility of the day-to-day operation and performance of each resort.

## Reducing Risks

Voyages IT&T General Manager Greg Hucker says having the night audit and data backup process performed separately at each location was an unacceptable business risk. The accidental loss of a day's proceedings at any one of the hotels would be disastrous for both the guests — through an interrupted or impacted holiday experiences — and the business.

The geographically dispersed IT infrastructure meant Voyages IT&T staff had to travel to each property four times a year to deal with routine issues — a substantial administrative overhead of both time and money.

To address these business concerns, Voyages recruited Commander to undertake a comprehensive audit of Voyages IT Infrastructure, policies and procedures. In collaboration with Commander, Voyages IT management established a three-year strategy that would support the business' growth plans. A key outcome from this strategy was the need to undertake an extensive consolidation and centralisation project.

When the company overhauled its IT infrastructure, it centralised operations wherever practical. The focus of the project was on communications, leveraging Citrix products and vastly improving storage management through the deployment of a Hitachi storage solution.

"For us, the cornerstone to our strategy was consolidation," Hucker says. "And the outcomes of this strategy were to save the business money, to improve performance and availability and to build in greater redundancy on a number of levels."

Hucker says the primary goal of the overhaul was to reduce the complexity of the Voyages IT operation. The major focus of the project was to improve the performance and “smarts” of its environment, including the way it handled critical data backup issues.

As a result of the investment, Voyages now boasts three data centres — one each in Sydney, Ayres Rock and Cairns. Through the deployment of Hitachi Adaptable Modular Storage 500 and storage area network technology, each data centre now contains over



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8TB (terabytes) of data storage capacity. Given the company’s ever growing storage requirements, Hucker says system scalability was a crucial requirement, and the Hitachi system at each data centre “can easily expand up to 24TB of data with fairly simple modular add-ons.”

The Adaptable Modular Storage 500 models boast high-end features previously associated only with large corporate sites, such as the ability optimise performance based on application requirements with cache partitioning and advanced data protection with RAID-6.

## Core Business Focus

Though not a primary driver for the investment, the project has also delivered cost savings, particularly in reduced travel for IT&T staff. More importantly though, Hucker says the changes mean that staff at each location can now focus on the Voyages core business of providing for guests.

“This business is not about data centres and smart storage,” Hucker says. “The business is to make sure that guests are enjoying their stay, that they are organised and are having that memorable experience. And the new

system has given staff at each location the ability to shave off the amount of time they would have spent on mundane IT admin tasks.”

The end-to-end night audit process for Voyages properties now takes 20 minutes, compared to six hours previously. Similarly, the SAN has dramatically reduced backup times. Using Hitachi ShadowImage® Replication software, IT staff can take a point-in-time copy of the properties’ Oracle database in about five minutes, compared to a four-hour data export process previously used.

## Planning for the Future

Though the initial phase on the IT overhaul focused on storage consolidation issues, Hucker said the company acquired site licenses for Hitachi disaster recovery software — Hitachi TrueCopy® Remote Replication software — which it will soon pilot at its three data centres.

Given the challenges presented by remote data communications — and Voyages’ use of a mix of radio, satellite, Frame Relay, ISDN and business ADSL — Hucker says it was not practical to centralise the processing and storage of the entire portfolio of remote properties without compromising system uptime and availability.

But Hucker credits the flexibility of the Hitachi SAN for allowing the company to design a unique solution that lets the company achieve its business goals for the project without introducing unnecessary business risk.

Voyages engaged technology services firm Commander as its primary systems integration partner for the project, though Hucker says the storage component of the solution

was so critical to its success that the company insisted on the direct involvement of Hitachi Data Systems as well.

“We made sure that Hitachi [Data Systems] had a good hand in with Commander, especially toward the implementation stage of the project, and also for Hitachi [Data Systems] to have direct involvement with our own people,” he says. “Due to the size and

## About Commander

The Commander business has been tailoring leading business communications and technology solutions to meet Australia’s business needs for over 25 years.

Commander began with office telephone systems. Through a series of strategic acquisitions and relationships with leading technology companies, the company broadened its expertise to provide complete business communications and technology solutions. Commander solutions span office and mobile telephony, IT hardware and software, Internet and network access, converged solutions, support and maintenance services, and software licensing.

In 2006, Commander and Volante joined forces, introducing infrastructure solutions, software solutions, strategic consulting services and Volante Managed Services to the portfolio. The breadth of Commander solutions is unmatched by any other Australian ICT organisation.

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