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Marketplace Update

Neverfail for BES Ensuring Continuous Availability for BlackBerry Enterprise Server

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Neverfail for BES – Ensuring Continuous Availability for BlackBerry Enterprise Server

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Introduction

Since the earliest days of the Internet, email has reigned supreme as a “killer app” for the majority of online users. This is perfectly reasonable. The near-real time, always on/always connected nature of email is seductive. However, its ability to seamlessly exchange documents and other information has helped make email a critical tool for business processes ranging from communicating with customers and business partners to easing the flow of information throughout organizations.

Those same features and end user benefits have gone “on the road” thanks to the emergence of mobile devices including smart phones and personal digital assistants (PDAs) that support email functions. For growing numbers of organizations, mobile email is not merely a handy technology but a mission-critical means for enabling executives and other workers. These employees depend on mobile email solutions to provide seamless availability to company communications and processes regardless of their location.

While mobile email service is somewhat transparent some email devices are far more tangible. In particular, the BlackBerry products created by Research In Motion (RIM) have gained a level of public recognition typically reserved for fast-food brands and notorious celebrities. Anyone who spends time in airports, hotels, and convention centers is intimately familiar with the sight and sound of BlackBerry’s being put to use by their road warrior owners. For these and other mobile workers the BlackBerry offers a critical link to company email, information, and applications.

When Mobile Email is Immobilized

The virtually ubiquitous nature of BlackBerry’s email service gives rise to an uncomfortable question; what happens when a disaster strikes that makes that service unavailable? The answer came clear on Tuesday April 17, 2007 when RIM’s network operations center in Waterloo, Ontario suffered an unplanned six hour service failure. The resulting email pileup disrupted businesses and business people across North America, taking them hours or even days to recover.

While the outage in April resulted from issues within RIM’s Network Operations Center potential disruptions occur daily at a local level. Most organizations which rely on BlackBerry’s enable mobile applications and email delivery through RIM’s BlackBerry Enterprise Server, making BES a potential single point of failure requiring protection against planned and unplanned outages. Yet traditional information protection strategies, which tend to focus on data recovery, are virtually guaranteed to interrupt BlackBerry service at some point.

Is there any way companies can avoid the hassles, heartbreak, and hair-pulling of planned and unplanned service interruptions? Neverfail for RIM BlackBerry Enterprise Server (BES) is designed to provide continuous availability and end-to-end protection for business-critical mobile email and data service platforms. The success of Neverfail for BES speaks volumes about the crucial importance of keeping employees constantly connected.

The Changing Nature of Work

Mobile email solutions such as Neverfail for BES stand at a curious juncture in the history of human employment. Communications technologies are fundamentally changing traditional business processes, with companies providing mobile devices to a widening range of employees who are expected to remain available and connected.

Who constitutes current classes of mobility-enabled employees?

- High profile traveling executives – These are obvious beneficiaries of ubiquitous access to company information, using voice communication and email to remain closely connected to critical business information and strategic decision-making.
- Traditional mobile workers – This group includes employees including sales reps, service technicians and delivery drivers whose work is performed largely or entirely away from central offices. For these workers, ready access to business information is critical to becoming and remaining maximally efficient.
- Remote workers – One of the most profound recent changes in business behavior is the rise of employees working from remote locations such as home offices. These include full-time and flex-time workers, as well as contractors and part-time employees. In virtually every case, mobile information access is critical to how these individuals perform their jobs.
- Occasional travelers – Whether lending support to sales and marketing campaigns or attending industry conferences and company events, employees need mobile technologies to perform their work. Without devices such as BlackBerry's these workers and their employers run the risk of being ineffective.

Bottom line? To remain efficient and effective, employees on-the-go require continuous, reliable access to mobile data. That data includes essential communications including voice, email, and instant messaging. But it also covers critical information such as company applications, documents, contracts, and files. At the end of the day, employment is all about performance, and increasingly locality is no excuse for lost productivity.

Mobile Access is Business Critical

The importance of business information access may seem obvious but it is also supported by market research data. In 2006 and 2007, Osterman Research conducted market studies of their own, and for Neverfail, that focused on the practical and critical use of email in business organizations. For example, survey participants sent/received an average of 140 messages per day, with some 46 percent spending 2+ hours on email tasks. Impressively, 76 percent said email was "extremely important" to getting their work done, and four out of five organizations queried used email to transmit critical business documents.

The survey also provided insight into the absence of email access. More than two thirds (69 percent) of study respondents said they would be "upset" or "extremely upset" if email service was down for just one hour during normal work hours, and a whopping 92 percent said they would be this upset by four hours of downtime. Just as impressive was the finding that more than half of the organizations participating in the survey considered eight hours of annual email downtime (about 40 minutes per month) to be unacceptable.

The Osterman Research study suggests that business users are remarkably attached to email processes, but we would submit that they are so for good reason. The growing importance of mobile email access rests on enabling seamless connections between management and workers away from the home office. Along with keeping employees connected to co-workers, partners, and suppliers, mobile email also can help enhance customer service and experience.

Improved employee productivity can improve the return-on-investment (ROI) of mobile email service but these technologies come with built-in challenges. Most important is that by their nature mobile devices add layers of operational complexity to IT infrastructures and services. The practical impact of this can range from businesses needing to increase their IT and support staff to the expansion of help desk services for mobile end-users.

Mobile Service Interruptions – The Good, Bad and Very Ugly

In general, blending operational complexity and business criticality tends to be a volatile mixture, especially since service interruptions are a simple fact of life for virtually every IT solution. The trick

companies need to learn is how to successfully manage mobile service interruptions so that employees and the greater business are not left in the dark.

There are two general classes of service interruptions – planned, and unplanned. Planned interruptions for service and maintenance can be painful, particularly for businesses operating globally, but they are necessary for maintaining peak communications performance. As a result, companies are best served by employing cost-effective solutions that effectively minimize or eliminate the disruptions of planned service interruptions.

Unplanned outages typically occur because of unforeseen technical interruptions or failures, or due to uncontrollable disasters – both natural and man-made. Surviving such events requires solutions that monitor system health and provide continuous availability. In addition, companies which need the highest levels of protection are best served by solutions that are supported by robust disaster recovery processes.

Considering the critical role of BlackBerry devices in supporting and delivering mobile business email, what sorts of options are available to protect them against planned and unplanned interruptions? For the most part, they are quite limited. For example, manual failover for BES is an extremely complex process, with outages often lasting for hours.

Additionally, server clustering is not supported on BES, and replication software is of limited use since cold boot to standby systems commonly causes lengthy delays and outages. While RIM has discussed the need for high availability solutions none have been delivered and the company's attention appears primarily fixed, logically enough, on its largest BES customers.

Neverfail for BES: High Availability = Business Continuity

Neverfail for BES is a mobile email option with a deceptively simple value proposition; to keep mobile email services always available regardless of component failure so that businesses and their employees can stay continuously connected. Neverfail for BES is designed to support the end-to-end BlackBerry delivery platform including BES, email, related files and applications, and Internet connectivity. In addition, Neverfail for BES supports Microsoft Exchange and IBM Lotus Domino mail servers and databases such as SQL Server, SQL Express, and Microsoft Desktop Engine (MSDE).

To achieve this, Neverfail for BES proactively monitors applications, ensuring the mobile delivery platform is working as it should. This helps to protect against component failures as well as site disasters. If an interruption does occur, the Neverfail solution is architected to eliminate BES initialization delays. According to Neverfail, mobile messaging and data services are typically restored within 1-2 minutes. Businesses that wish to achieve higher levels of performance can leverage Neverfail SCOPE which gathers system and application configuration information, as well as performance data, enabling a predictive health check to be performed regularly.

Technical capabilities aside, Neverfail for BES is designed to deliver “carrier class” service for business critical BlackBerry devices and to fundamentally protect both the end-to-end BES mobility business case and the ROI of BlackBerry deployments. Neverfail for BES aims to achieve this in a highly cost-effective manner with a low hardware footprint that does not require SAN or clustering investments, and can be deployed in either a LAN or WAN environment. Since these features combined with Neverfail's fixed-cost professional services results in low total cost of ownership and operation, it should come as no surprise that Neverfail for BES is supported and recommended by Research In Motion and numerous customer references.

Customer Case Study – British American Tobacco

Founded in 1902, British American Tobacco is the world's most international tobacco company, selling over 300 brands in more than 180 markets. Based in London, the company has sustained a

significant global presence for more than 100 years and employs a strongly multi-cultural global workforce of more than 55,000.

British American Tobacco is among the UK's leading organizations using BlackBerry for applications beyond email. Continuously available mobile email and applications are essential to helping British American Tobacco's more than 700 executives communicate as they travel across the world and through many time zones. Most company executives use RIM BlackBerry devices to seamlessly access up-to-date management information, keep track of events and respond to co-workers, partners, and customers.

In order to protect its entire RIM BlackBerry Enterprise Server (BES) environment, British American Tobacco required solid failover capabilities for its IBM Lotus Domino and Microsoft SQL Server infrastructures. To deliver an "always available" BlackBerry environment, the company evaluated several high-availability and failover solutions. Concluding that the Neverfail product suite was the best available for the company's needs, the BlackBerry project started in 2006 and was delivered in stages throughout 2007.

The solution was put to the test in April 2007, when British American Tobacco determined that three days of electrical maintenance work was required at its London headquarters. Prior to implementing Neverfail, the risk of interrupting BlackBerry service would have made such a project a nightmare for the company's IT team. However, Neverfail's one-click failover option allowed British American Tobacco to consolidate what would once have been a complex 45-plus-step process into a single step. With just a click of a button, IT staff handled the failover of the company's BlackBerry applications to the disaster recovery site — in a matter of minutes — and subsequently failed those services back to the primary data center without incident. For British American Tobacco, Neverfail lived up to both its name and promise.

Conclusion

Traditional business is changing fundamentally due to an increasingly mobile workforce that requires continuous, reliable access to information. As a result, mobile email services have become business-critical for growing numbers of organizations that rely on solutions such as RIM's BlackBerry devices and the BlackBerry Enterprise Server (BES). BES offers customers notable benefits, but service interruptions can seriously impact businesses and employees including high-profile executives, traditional mobile workers, and remote-based staff. As a result, companies utilizing mobile email should consider technologies that defend mobile email systems against both planned and unplanned service interruptions.

Neverfail for BES is one such solution, aiming to protect the entire end-to-end BlackBerry delivery platform and keep mobile users always on/always connected despite interruptions including component failure. In addition to offering customers long term benefits and low-cost deployments, Neverfail for BES is supported and recommended by RIM and enjoys multiple customer references. Considering the critical role that BlackBerry devices play in supporting and delivering business-critical services, we believe that companies looking to maximize the performance and benefits of their mobile information investments would do well to investigate Neverfail for BES.

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About Pund-IT, Inc.

Pund-IT emphasizes understanding technology and product evolution and interpreting the effects these changes will have on business customers and the greater IT marketplace. This report is the result of research sponsored by Neverfail and developed by Pund-IT, Inc., which believes these findings are objective and represent the best analysis available at the time of publication.