

Arcserve versus Arkeia

THE DUEL

OLIVER KLUGE



Backup programs for servers are complex products and are also usually specially produced for specific domains of application. This article compares two well-known packages and introduces two alternatives.

Data produced using Linux is no less valuable than any other. Anyone who does not choose their software for backups with care will probably soon regret it. The following performance comparison of two well-known products should make it easier for you to choose.

Arcserve

Arcserve from Computer Associates (CA) has been a fixture on the market for a long time now. First appearing under the label Cheyenne, it was the backup solution for early operating systems. Linux is now a worthwhile platform for the server specialists.

The HTML interface of Arcserve looks garish, but it is still nice to use. This makes it easy for the administrator to seek out special solutions

Arcserve makes some demands of the system. Without a Korn shell and Apache Web server nothing whatsoever will work. The latter is required for the Web-based GUI. Circumstances that mean considerable additional expense for an individual server becomes an advantage in a server cluster: Administration from any point on the network is no problem, even without a client. CA uses Java applets for display. The installation script tests for the correct installation of the necessary components.

Despite the initially gaudy impression given by the GUI, with large icons for various objects and groups, Arcserve clearly presents lots of setting options. With the aid of the large icons, often-needed functions can be called up rapidly and directly, which gives the administrator enough flexibility to construct a solution for new demands quickly.

Arkeia

Arkeia from Knox is seeking to become the market leader in this field under Linux. The program behaves very modestly during installation. It does its duty within 10 minutes without any great orgies of installation – although this does not include the configuration. That takes somewhat longer.

The installation procedure itself seems somewhat antiquated. Certainly this is no backup software for the home user, but nowadays, even system administrators do not want to cut and paste the necessary installation command sequences out of a readme file into a shell. A small shell script would not be asking too much, nor would the storing of an icon in the KDE.



But the program immediately makes up for these minor inconveniences. The graphical speed control is handy, especially if the tape drives are far away in the server room.

Arkeia is of modular construction right down to the last tiny detail and all elements of a back up can be combined into groups. In this way, an administrator can monitor all tasks which arise centrally: from the total back up of a workstation, via the incremental databank copy up to networked enterprise back up strategies.

The extreme flexibility of the program does have the disadvantage, though, that solving a short-term problem which has just cropped up becomes fiddly because a lot of adjustment has to be done before the streamer starts to whirr.

The hierarchies in Arkeia are somewhat unusual. Many options can be defined both in the corresponding element, as well as in the overriding group (the command as to whether subdirectories are to be searched or not, for example). This is a double-edged sword. It can lead to confusion if the program behaves unexpectedly, while on the other hand, it does allow for particular flexibility when adapting to specific corporate needs. ■



Arkeia offers many detailed setting options for system administrators

Veritas Net Backup Business Server

Just before going to press we received the new program from Veritas. The great strengths of this package are, firstly, the distinctly broad platform support and secondly, the many optional agents. This means Oracle, Symbase and Informix server can be copied in the same way as Lotus Notes databases. With clients for all the latest operating systems, the package offers a good basis for central administration of locally performed backups too.
<http://www.veritas.com>



Product Overview

	Arkeia	Arcserve
Manufacturer	Knox Software	Computer Associates
Sales	SuSE	CA
Telephone	020 8387 4088	0161 928 9334
Internet	http://www.arkeia.com	http://www.ca.com/arcserve
Price	from £430	from £1000

Use

GUI Administration	yes	yes
Web-Interface	no	yes
Central administration	yes	yes
Command line	yes	yes

Scheduler

Calendar planning	yes	yes
Rotating Jobs	yes	yes
Prioritisation	yes	yes

Devices

Automatic recognition	no	yes (SCSI)
Barcode support	yes	yes
Trailer management	yes	yes

Extras

Virus testing	no	yes
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Quadrtec Time Navigator

The name of the product is derived from a feature: The user can 'travel back in time' when restoring and can thus see in advance the state of the data at any point in time.

Time Navigator comes with a great deal of equipment and is designed for large corporate networks. Installation goes smoothly and quickly. The modern GUI design is striking, and is especially seductive because of its clarity. Although Time Navigator also offers an exceptional number of detailed setting and control options, it is still simple and logical to use, with a wizard to help if there are any remaining unclear points.

Wherever groups are formed (server, drives, tapes and so on), Quadrtec uses impressive icons. The user can at any time click on the information they need and click away the rest – thereby obtaining an overview. Tracking jobs that are run simultaneously or spread out is also no problem with this GUI concept.

The software appears expensive at first (from £3000). But Quadrtec has a completely different price structure from the competition. The firm uses linear scales, as hardware and software structure increases in size (agents). As the result of this, Time Navigator becomes cheaper for large installations. <http://www.quadrtec-software.com>.