

METTEL

MetTel Conquers SQL Server Log Shipping and Improves Data Recovery with IDERA Tools

CHALLENGE

MetTel - Metropolitan Communications – is an integrated communications provider offering a portfolio of local, long distance, cellular, business, and data services, including Internet access and VoIP solutions, to more than 5,000 small- to medium-size businesses across the United States. MetTel's 160 employees specialize in providing consolidated billing so services can be aggregated for those businesses with multiple locations, such as retail chains, banks and financial services, hospital and healthcare organizations. Management and account teams can then view and access all of their telecom spending through a unique in-house portal, allowing them to better control of their telecom spending.

Senior SQL Server Database Administrator Chad Markle required a comprehensive and cost-effective method of setting up database log shipping to their locations in New York, Utah, and Rhode Island.

ORGANIZATON PROFILE

Industry Communications

Headquarters New York, NY

Website www.mettel.net

Background MetTel is a leading provider of data, network, cloud and mobile IT solutions for businesses and government agencies nation-wide.

SOLUTION

IDERA's SQL Safe Backup backup provides an interface that allows MetTel to easily create, manage, and monitor backup and log shipping jobs to ensure backups and data recovery perform as specified. With SQL Safe Backup's virtual database tool, they also have the ability to more effectively retrieve data and respond to problems in a timely manner.

It was IDERA's licensing model for SQL Safe Backup that first caught Senior SQL Server Database Administrator Chad Markle's attention when shopping for a new SQL backup tool five years ago. "We wanted to set up log shipping, but the licensing model for the backup product we were using at the time wasn't favorable for doing so." Because the licensing model only requires a license for production instances on which backups are made, "with SQL Safe Backup, restores to any SQL Server instance are included in the license. Since we wanted to have multiple restore points for multiple instances, it made a lot more sense to go with SQL Safe Backup from a cost perspective. It allowed us to do what we wanted to do at a more reasonable price," he said.

SAVE TIME AND SPACE

Markle is taking full advantage of the product's high performance backup and recovery capabilities, which help him monitor MetTel's large repository of critical billing and usage data. "With data recovery now being done across the network, it has saved us a lot of time and space, allowing us to make better use of those secondary servers and handle more SQL Server instances," Markle said.

One of Markle's favorite features is SQL Safe Backup's single console, which makes it fast and easy to execute backup and recovery operations on multiple servers and databases at the same time. "With this version, the single console lets us see all of our SQL backups, log shipping, and policies," he said. The centralized console is also a great tool for Markle to monitor current backup and data recovery operations, as well as retrieve historical information.

"We have one place we can go and see if things are performing the way they should and if backups are performing. Plus, our management team can easily see if things are working and stay on top of the backups. They can also make sure we are doing our jobs and discover if something isn't working," he added.

SQL Safe Backup's speed is also proving to be a great asset for MetTel's DBAs. "From a speed standpoint, I have fewer re-tries doing log shipping restores with the way SQL Safe Backup has implemented log shipping," Markle said. Another new feature, zero impact encryption, has allowed Markle to consider doing more data encrypting going forward. "It should have virtually no impact on our resources to implement this security feature," Markle said.

- Reduces backup time dramatically, increasing the available window in which to perform other critical SQL Server maintenance activities
- Ensures compliance with corporate backup policies by defining and automating a backup schedule across multiple servers and databases
- Saves time by being at least 50 percent faster than native backups and saves space by compressing files by up to 95 percent
- Accelerates mean time to recovery with virtual databases made from SQL Safe Backup or native SQL Server backup files, performs well when you need it most—in an emergency
- Replaces time consuming object level recovery

It is very easy to get the data you need so there's less downtime and you get to it fast. It's very effective, especially if it's something that has caused a big outage. It's a lot easier to get yourself back online quickly...

Now, it's simply a matter of attaching any log backups and within a few minutes, I'm accessing the data in the database.

It went from taking me hours to minutes.

Chad Markle **Senior SQL Server Database Administrator** for MetTel



ACCESS BACKUP FILES WITHOUT RESTORING

MetTel is also using SQL Safe Backup's virtual database tool to turn its backup files into a virtual database. This powerful one-of-a-kind solution allows Markle and his team to attach SQL Server backup files and query them as if they were real databases without having to do restores.

Coupled with SQL Safe Backup, Markle explains, "I now have the tools to retrieve data and respond to any user mishaps in a timelier manner."

Being able to pinpoint and retrieve data is extremely useful for Markle and his team. For example, when a billing team member accidentally deleted some usage files during routine database maintenance, Markle was able to use the virtual database functionality to save the day. "I got a frantic call asking if I could retrieve the information. I was able to create a virtual database and link it to one of our backup servers and a couple of the log backups. I could then attach to the database at a certain point in time where the user could get his data back and just copy it into the production server and put it back where it was," Markle explained. Without this tool, this process would have taken hour or days, instead of minutes.

Another benefit for Markle is the simple and intuitive interface and its ability to recover databases to a specific point in time without having to do a full restore. "It is very easy to get the data you need so there's less downtime and you get to it fast. It's very effective, especially if it's something that has caused a big outage. It's a lot easier to get yourself back online quickly," Markle said. "Now, it's simply a matter of me attaching any log backups and within a few minutes, I'm accessing the data in the database. It went from taking me hours to minutes."

With SQL Safe Backup's virtual database tool, Markle has even been able to repurpose older, slower servers for testing. "I've used the product as a poor-man's development environment. Now, I can basically attach to a backup and test out new procedures and code," he said. "If I do something I didn't want to do ... all I have to do is just reattach and it's fresh data again. I can test it without having a fully dedicated test environment for all my different SQL Server instances."

In conclusion, Markle said the power package of SQL Safe Backup and its virtual database tool has proven a valuable addition. SQL Safe Backup greatly simplifies the task of setting up and managing backup and log shipping schedules and provides exception reporting to highlight any jobs that did not complete as scheduled. With SQL Safe Backup's virtual database tool, Markle gains instant access to data without requiring additional time or space to perform database restores.

Working closely with IDERA's product development team, Markle said MetTel is also happy that the team listens to their concerns and incorporates suggestions into future product releases. "A lot of our suggestions have been implemented and it truly makes our lives easier," he said.

SQL Safe Backup

AUTOMATE SQL SERVER BACKUP ACROSS YOUR ENTERPRISE

- Backup faster and save space via dynamic compression with encryption
- Choose from multiple options for recovery
- Ensure organizational compliance via policy-based management
- Reduce failures due to temporary network problems
- Receive alerts and create reports with centralized web console

Start for FREE

The screenshot shows the IDERA SQL Safe Backup web console. The top navigation bar includes 'HOME', 'POLICIES', 'OPERATION HISTORY', 'INSTANCES', 'DATABASES', 'SQL SAFE AGENTS', 'VIRTUAL DATABASE', and 'ADMINISTRATION'. The user is logged in as 'konoha|administrator'. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Alerts:** A section titled 'YOU HAVE 23 ALERTS' with buttons for 'Export' and 'Hide alerts'. It lists four alerts with levels 2 and 3, including messages like '5 databases never backed up' and 'Last backup operation for 15 databases succeeded'.
- TOP DATABASES BY SIZE (MB):** A horizontal bar chart showing database sizes for 'ContosoRetail', 'AdventureWo...', and 'Northwind'.
- LONGEST RUNNING BACKUPS BY DATABASE (MINUTES):** A horizontal bar chart showing backup durations for 'ContosoRetail', 'AdventureWo...', 'model', and 'msdb'.
- My Environment:** A summary table showing counts for various system components.
- Status Details:** A summary of policy and operation status.
- Disk Space Savings:** A table showing disk space usage and savings over time.

At the bottom, there are buttons for 'Add instance', 'Create policy', 'Backup', and 'Restore'.