

Catalogic Simplifies Management of Pure Storage Environment for Arvato

Push-button automation of FlashArray copy functions makes data protection and recovery easy

When Arvato needed a way to make management and operation of their Pure Storage arrays easier, they turned to Catalogic ECX for push-button easy copy automation.

Arvato, a division of Bertelsmann, is an international service provider with some 70,000 employees in more than 40 countries. When the Arvato CRM North America business unit needed high-powered data storage, it turned to the Pure Storage FlashArray //M50, deploying one in each of two data centers.

According to Robert Hernandez, Arvato System Engineer, “We manage contact centers for some very major businesses. As the IT department, we provide the infrastructure and the backbone to do that.” Part of the required task is to ensure that data is protected and easily recoverable. To do so, Arvato turned to Pure Storage array snapshots and Catalogic ECX to manage the process.

“We’re using ECX to back up all the data on our Pure arrays,” said Hernandez. “What drew me to Catalogic was the fact that it’s using the horsepower that Pure already had. Ultimately, Catalogic is an orchestration component to Pure.”

As an in-place copy data management solution, Catalogic ECX doesn’t replace any Pure Storage functionality: it provides automation, management simplicity and integration (VMware, applications, file systems). By using the existing Pure Storage features, Catalogic leverages the performance and data reduction capabilities of the FlashArray to make use of Pure’s expansive ability to support 50,000 snapshots per storage array.

“The biggest draw to Catalogic is that it simplifies the whole process and enables not very advanced users to do all the things I need them to do on the Pure arrays,” said Hernandez. “Things like backup and restore that they would not be able to do normally.”

With Catalogic ECX, the more junior members of the IT department can deliver the same services as storage experts, but with a much shorter learning curve. This is especially important in a service-focused organization that is constantly faced with new IT challenges.



Hernandez commented, “It’s really difficult when things are in a sprint mode. We’re constantly moving. So, I need something I can hand off to one of the more junior systems people here that isn’t going to require a ton of reading up on Pure arrays and how to handle the storage snapshots. I need something that says, ‘Here’s the policies, here’s what you’re backing up, here’s when.’ That’s what I need to be able to provide them.” ECX fits the bill by providing simple, SLA-based protection policies.

In addition, ECX provides a Roles Based Access Control (RBAC) feature that allows users to be given only select access to specific features and functions. “We do use the RBAC functionality, absolutely,” Hernandez said. “We use it for people who just need to generate reports, or higher-level management that want to look around but shouldn’t affect policies. It’s nice to be able to have an executive look at all that we can do for them.”

In addition to RBAC features, ECX reporting also lets Hernandez deliver information easily to auditors or management. “It’s something nice to show executives or an auditor. We have to maintain compliance for all our customers, and it doesn’t hurt to show an auditor that here’s how it works. And doing that in Pure versus doing that in Catalogic is vastly different. With Catalogic, I can explain very easily here’s how everything works. The reporting makes my boss very happy. They are all about those reports. The SLA reports alone make my job easier.”

ECX also provides easy access to data for multiple data-reuse scenarios such as data analytics or patch testing. Arvato is only just beginning to explore this capability,

starting with a management server. “My intention is to take a snapshot of the server, patch the copy, and then make sure everything works. Then patch the primary,” Hernandez said. ECX makes this simple.

Similarly, while ECX is currently driving much of the VMware environment, Hernandez is planning to expand the use to cover SQL Server. The combined ability of the FlashArray to create backup snapshots that don’t affect application performance plus the SQL awareness of ECX are a perfect match. “When we’re doing a backup snapshot, Pure doesn’t move a muscle. For the SQL application, it’s like it doesn’t actually happen, which is why it’s so appealing to have Catalogic. Once we roll over to more SQL use, our SLAs will likely kick up. I do have a database for testing that’s running snapshots every four hours, and it doesn’t skip a beat.”

Increased protection SLAs will allow for more frequent protection of SQL data.

For Hernandez, the bottom line is that Catalogic ECX allows them to derive the most value out of their Pure Storage investment. “Before ECX there were some Pure snapshots being done, being done the good old fashioned hard way. It was being sporadically done. Catalogic enabled us to do more.”

Hernandez summed up Arvato’s use of ECX very directly: “The biggest draw to Catalogic for me is that I can do pretty complex things in a really easy way.”

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50 Tice Boulevard, Suite 110
Woodcliff Lake, NJ 07677
201.249.8980
U.S.A.
catalogicsoftware.com

United Kingdom: +44 (0) 207 712 1667
Germany: +49 (0) 2102 307614 0
Netherlands: + 31 (0) 20 347 23 88

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