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Issue #9

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Sept 2004

Lori's Scholarship

The University of Utah just had a unique opportunity, and we rose to the challenge. We're all aware of the tragedy that befell Lori Kay Soares Hacking, and the wonderful gesture by the Soares family to set up a scholarship to the David Eccles School of Business in her name.

Two weeks ago, the School of Business learned that Thelma Soares would be a guest on the Oprah Show, Good Morning America, The Today Show and CBS Early Show, and within two days, departments across campus came together to set up donation mechanisms in anticipation of the national coverage.

This was a complicated process requiring intense collaboration from groups all over campus: the David Eccles School of Business, Media Solutions and the University Webmaster, the Web Advisory Committee, OIT Systems Application Design, the Institutional Security Office, the Office of Information Technology, Income Accounting, Adminstrative Computing Services, Central Development Office, Public Relations, University Marketing and Legal Counsel. This campus coalition accomplished the following:

1. Set up financial accounts for donations
2. Contracted with an outside telephone agency to handle up to 500,000 calls/hour
3. Developed a customized website for the Scholarship
4. Developed a customized on-line payment process and donation confirmation process
5. Approved a change on the U's home page
6. Reviewed and revised contractual documents
7. Audited e-commerce processes
8. Handled incoming press calls from local media
9. Anticipated and prepared for numerous telephone questions and calls
10. Anticipated and prepared for numerous and obscurely addressed letters
11. Communicated sensitively and responsively to the Soares family to address their wishes and needs

According to Kathy Hajeb, School of Business Project Manager, "The collaboration was FABULOUS. Everyone approached the project with enthusiasm and professionalism. Communication between groups was in the spirit of 'keeping every-one in the loop.' An atmosphere of continuous improvement and customer service was the standard the team worked by."

To date, the Scholarship has received over $23,000 donations via the website and phone. More are forthcoming by mail, and that total does not include the $50,000 donated by Oprah. On Wednesday, September 15th, 363 personal messages were exported from the website for Thema Soares. To visit the site and possibly donate, please see **www.lori.utah.edu**.

IT News

deans/directors/department heads

Issue #9

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Sept 2004

What is a Storage Area Network?

Jim Livingston
ITS Data Resource Center Director

Because of the constantly increasing demand for data, governments and corporations are making large investments in enterprise data storage systems. This upward trend affects the University of Utah as campus organizations make large investments in data storage technology to support our diverse needs. The number of dollars invested in storage is increasing while the cost per megabyte is decreasing. However, our costs aren't decreasing because the demand for data storage is growing faster than the price is decreasing.

There are two primary storage methodologies used at the University: Server-Attached Storage (SAS) and Storage Area Network (SAN). SAS is the traditional approach to storage where a data storage device stores information for a specific server or server cluster. Your e-mail backup is a typical example. A SAN is a high-speed special-purpose network that interconnects different kinds of data storage devices with associated data servers on behalf of a larger network of users.

SAS is the natural fit for the traditional approach of buying storage to meet the needs of a specific application server or cluster of servers. Each time storage space needs to be added or upgraded, the server or cluster of servers needs to be shut down. Once the server is back up, the new storage cannot be used until new data volumes are created. This can create extensive downtime which may be unacceptable for mission critical applications.

SAN technology reduces system downtime by making it possible to add disks or expand volumes without the need to shut down the server. SAN technology allows computer drives to process requests to read or write data to existing SAN volumes at the same time new disks are added, or volumes are being expanded.

Traditional SAS storage methods can waste resources because each server requires its own storage space, much of which may be left unused. This stranded storage represents a potentially significant unused resource.

SAN technology can improve and simplify storage management by consolidating data into a large pool as opposed to storing data on many different systems. In a SAN environment, storage can be classified or tiered based on the critical nature of the data. Mission critical data is normally stored on very expensive, fault tolerant hardware, while archived data may be stored on much less expensive equipment. Instead of maintaining different storage environments for critical and non-critical data, a SAN makes it possible to incorporate these varying levels of storage devices into a single, more manageable environment. Cost efficiency and manageability is further improved because the sharing of SAN technology makes it possible to take full advantage of the available storage space.

As we all know, not all departments have the same IT resources at their disposal. There may be cases where, due to a lack of resources, important data is stored on substandard or non-redundant hardware. This could result in a loss of data that is important to the operation of a department. It may make sense in the future for the University to take advantage of SAN technology to level the playing field between departments.

We may see a time in the not-to-distant future when, in addition to local storage resources, every department has access to a highly reliable Storage Area Network that will lower our costs through resource sharing, backup and protect critical resources with equipment that is appropriate to the task, and increase the level of service that we can collectively provide to students, faculty, and staff.