

StorSimple Data Restore Console for SharePoint

Solution Brief

Why StorSimple?

StorSimple is a solution designed to enable simple and efficient granular restore of individual SharePoint objects that may accidentally have been deleted by users.

Challenges

- Selective data restore from SharePoint content databases, especially ones that are larger than 20 GB, is a time consuming and inefficient
- Restoring an objects requires the entire farm content to be restored and a selective copy of the required objects
- Restoring a SharePoint site is not possible once deleted
- No easy way to locate objects to be restored in the backup
- Backup up and disaster recovery implementations are complex and costly

The StorSimple Solution

- End to end backup and restore solution designed to seamlessly leverage deduplication, compression and cloud storage and efficiently offer granular restore capability
- Simple drag-and-drop mechanism for restoring content helps restore content in less time and for less cost
- Eliminates same site restore constraints permitting content to be restored to different locations or servers
- Improve content search capability through the use of Advanced Find feature that operates across databases
- Maintains data integrity during the recovery operation by keeping the SharePoint metadata intact

Microsoft SharePoint Data Restore Challenges

SharePoint has rapidly become a cornerstone of collaboration in today's business. Providing users and teams with the ability to quickly deploy sites and share information has increased productivity and produced many tangible business benefits. SharePoint's ease of use coupled with the power of the solution has also presented a series of problems to administrators who now have to help users recover from genuine errors where they accidentally delete an object which they did not intend to delete, for example a SharePoint site. Recovering from such as error can invariably force the SharePoint administrator to restore the entire backup image of the appropriate content database followed by the identification and manual restore of the deleted object. This is a laborious and time consuming process that often involves coordination across multiple departments and personnel – SharePoint administrator, database administrator and the storage administrator.

The StorSimple Solution

The StorSimple Data Restore Console is a windows application that can be installed on any server and allows item-level granular content restores of documents, lists, libraries and folders – or entire SharePoint sites into a SharePoint 2010 farm using an intuitive drag-and-drop mechanism. SDRC directly reads the SharePoint content database (MDF, NDF and LDF) files without requiring them to be mounted on a SQL Server server, and presents the contained objects in a hierarchical structured format that maps to the original content hierarchy. Once the database has been read individual objects or sites from the SharePoint farm can be restored onto the target farm. The use of the StorSimple Database Optimizer (SSDO) solution further optimizes the process by externalizing BLOB content out of the database and in effect reducing the size of the database that SDRC has to read through and interpret by up to 95%. In addition to this the StorSimple VSS consistent Snapshots, Cloud Snaps and Cloud Clones taken using the StorSimple Data Protection Manager can be used to provide an easy way of backing up and restoring the data with a few mouse clicks. SDRC also provides a robust search function on source items using which particular items can be identified using a variety of criteria, like keywords, date, subject, etc.



Alternative Approaches

Many approaches claim to provide simple item-level restore capability with minimal processing needs and low backup storage costs, however, each falls short compared to StorSimple

- Traditional SharePoint backup solutions adopt an inefficient, laborious approach for item level restores, restoring the entire SharePoint backup and then the required items are identified and selectively restored. The StorSimple solution offers an elegant and efficient way of searching for the items to be restored, and restoring only the items needed
- Item-level restore tools allow granular restores but do so by implementing proprietary backup formats thereby resulting in vendor lock-in. StorSimple provides complete item-level restore capabilities via backups that are stored in the native SharePoint/SQL Server format
- Item-level restore tools are not able to perform intelligent deduplication or compression of the data, nor leverage cheaper storage tiers like the cloud. The StorSimple solution provides Microsoft VSS consistent snapshot backups that are deduplicated, compressed, encrypted and can be stored in the cloud. Restoring specific items from these backups constitutes retrieving only the associated meta data and data and not the entire backup set

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How It Works

StorSimple uses Microsoft VSS to create point in time consistent snapshots of the backed up volumes and stores these on the StorSimple storage appliance (local backup) or out in the cloud (offsite backup). The backups are deduplicated and compressed resulting on average an 800% reduction in size. These backup are encrypted using AES-256 encryption before being written out to the cloud over a secure HTTP (HTTPS) channel. Policies are supported for creating backups on periodic intervals, as well as specify retention periods. All local and offsite backups are always online and available for restoration. Only the metadata for the set of volumes to be restored is accessed initially, the content is accessed on an as needed basis resulting in a quick recover of the required data. Once the set of backed up volumes have been restored the StorSimple Data Restore Console implements a powerful advanced Find capability which can be used to search for any object in the backup set using a variety of criteria. The content of the backed up data as well as the SharePoint site are graphically depicted and an intuitive drag-and-drop functionality is provided to restore the required items back in to SharePoint. The metadata associated with the restored content is fully preserved and restored as well using Microsoft supported means. The StorSimple SharePoint Database Optimizer solution adds another level of efficiency by not requiring the externalized BLOB store data to be restored for scenarios where the data to be restored is related only to the database data (meta data) and the BLOB store content is intact

StorSimple Benefits

- **Minimizes the time to restore an individual item, list, folder, site, or library** – SDRC can slash restore time, making it possible to granularly restore items from a previous full backup that is stored locally or in the cloud. Items from database backup can be restored individually, giving you restore flexibility and eliminating the need to perform to a full site restoration in order to find the items you need
- **Eliminates same site restore constraint** - by eliminating same site restore constraint, SDRC gives you the flexibility to restore to origination or alternate SharePoint locations. SDRC allows you to restore directly into your production SharePoint server or a file system
- **Minimizes the time to locate all matching specific criteria** - SDRC includes an Advanced Find feature that can search across all content databases in an archive SharePoint file, rather than bringing an old backup back online for analysis. You can search by a variety of criteria, including keywords, subject, date, specific users, and file and attachment data
- **Maintains data integrity of the SharePoint source** – When requests for SharePoint data restoration arise, it can be critical to keep the metadata (original author, time/date created, time/date last modified, etc.) of restored items intact. SDRC does not change the contents or metadata of the SharePoint source, and maintains data integrity of the SharePoint source by performing read-only operation
- **Minimizes the costs involved in restoring lost items** - SDRC eliminates the need to have an expensive restoration server available, as well as the cost associated with the extra steps required to separately import sites back into SharePoint to find items needed. Since it can directly read backed up database files there is no need to purchase proprietary software for creating the backups