

## DATEV eG, Nuremberg

Delivering Rapid and Reliable System Recovery in Germany's Leading Supplier of Accounting Software for Small and Medium-sized Businesses

Storage capacity of no more than 320 kilobytes on two IBM mainframes was available when DATEV was founded in 1969. The founders' vision was to support 'members of the tax consulting professions' with software, consulting services and a computer center. Today, DATEV manages data volumes of 300 terabytes and reigns supreme among suppliers of financial accounting programs for small and medium-sized businesses. The financial accounting for two-thirds of all German companies is handled using DATEV software, entailing an impressive total of 2.4 million sets of business accounts. Even more impressively, the majority of this accounting data is stored at DATEV itself. All this makes reliable systems and efficient administration an absolute necessity. And DATEV relies on Symantec for system recovery and PC software installation. Symantec Backup Exec™ System Recovery ensures rapid and reliable system recovery should a failure occur, while Symantec Ghost™ Solution Suite guarantees efficient and reliable software installation.

### 2.4 million business accounts per annum

As varied as Germany's small and medium-sized businesses can be, most have a great deal in common when it comes to the software they use to prepare their annual financial statements: it is likely to come from DATEV. Two-thirds of all business accounts are prepared either by a tax consultant or in-house with the help of DATEV solutions, a total of 2.4 million business accounts per annum. And that's not all: DATEV is also responsible for providing two million business assessments and over seven million payroll accounts each month.

What may initially sound like a range of specialized products in a dedicated market niche has therefore gained substantial market share. This applies equally to DATEV financial accounting products as well as to the company's archiving services. The audit trails for the business accounts of 98 per cent of all companies whose figures are processed using DATEV software are archived at the company's computer center in Nuremberg.

Whether it is dealing with accounting or archiving, DATEV itself generally keeps a low profile. It sells software solutions to tax consultants who use them to keep their clients' books. DATEV's customers include some 39,000 tax consultants, certified

### Company profile

DATEV provides software and consulting services for tax consultants, certified accountants, lawyers and their clients. It supplies everything its customers need for their work and customer support, from a database with the latest legal judgments to client administration software and financial accounting programs.

### Industry

Technology

### Solution

Client Security

### Symantec products

- Symantec Backup Exec™ System Recovery
- Symantec pcAnywhere™
- Symantec Ghost™ Solution Suite

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### Harald Dazian

Head of Servers, Data Network and Internet Services



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accountants and lawyers. At the same time they are also members of the company, which is legally a registered cooperative society. DATEV supplies around 200 programs that offer the useful digital support that is required by fiscal, auditing and legal experts: software that tax consultants use to manage their offices, programs that enable certified accountants to document their audits and databases that help lawyers read up on the latest case law.

**Pioneers in their field**

DATEV is a software company with a long tradition. It was initially set up more than forty years ago. The founders operated with rented computing power for three years before finally starting up their own computer center in Nuremberg. This was launched with two IBM 360-series mainframes that offered a total storage capacity of 320 kilobytes. At the time, this represented a huge volume of data; although by contrast, DATEV servers today manage around 300 terabytes of information. The workforce has also experienced lightning expansion, with the company – now one of the region’s biggest employers – currently employing some 5,400 staff, 1,250 of whom are software developers.

**Rapid and reliable system recovery – without leaving the workstation**

At DATEV, reliable systems are an absolute must. This applies to the company’s servers with their huge volumes of customer data as well as to DATEV’s email and Microsoft Office systems, which are distributed across 350 servers at three different computer centre locations. The 40 terabytes on these servers contain crucial business correspondence, proposals, order extensions and the results of negotiations – in other words, information that has to be accessible to DATEV consultants and customer support staff whenever they need it. So it is vital that the systems operate efficiently. And in the event that any of them should fail, the IT department has to have a contingency plan in place.

This is the responsibility of Harald Dazian, head of servers, data network and internet services at DATEV. “In an emergency, a system with a guaranteed highest service level has to be restored within just a few minutes,” he says. Harald Dazian provides this Service Level 1 for 100 servers operating with business critical data, which includes customer correspondence, personal details, software development resources and print and send control data. He manages Service Level 2, which guarantees next-day system recovery, for a further 250 servers running Microsoft Office applications and documents, application programs and department data.

He works with Symantec software. “We opted for Symantec Backup Exec System Recovery because it was the first solution on the market to store Windows server operating systems as an image while they’re running. And this ensures the fastest possible recovery,” says Harald Dazian. By contrast, a traditional manual restore or entire reinstallation could take hours.

As well as using Symantec Backup Exec System Recovery, Harald Dazian applies the Symantec pcAnywhere solution within his remit. “This allows us to perform a remote system restore without leaving our workstations. We can access each of our three computer centre locations directly,” he explains. The software thus not only saves valuable recovery time but also unnecessary work for administrators – even outside regular office hours: “Symantec pcAnywhere allows us to organize our emergency service at night and at weekends as an on-call service from home.” The administrators can get to grips with the problem without actually being present at the computer center themselves, recovering a system from home within a matter of minutes.

Not only does Symantec LifeState Recovery offer a rapid and reliable method of recovery, it also captures recovery points without impairing system performance. DATEV backs up

the operating systems at night. “This is a fast process because the system need only save the changes that have been made to the operating system,” says Harald Dazian.

### **Efficient and error-free: software distribution to desktops and laptops**

What’s more, DATEV looks after so many systems that even minor potential time-savings on administration quickly add up to hours and days. Currently around 7,000 PCs, including some 2,000 laptops, are managed in DATEV’s central office communications network.

DATEV always buys the hardware only, installing the operating systems and applications on an in-house basis. This is the job of Frank Günthör, Head of PC IT technology, mainline and systems management. He has been working with the Symantec Ghost™ Solution Suite for ten years now. This solution stores PC operating systems, configurations and software as an image that can be subsequently implemented on PCs.

Frank Günthör’s team has already built around ten different software images. The appropriate digital package will be installed on the user’s system, depending on the task and user hierarchy involved. “The software has to be installed rapidly and reliably on each individual PC,” says Frank Günthör. “Even if there is only a difference of a few minutes for every PC, the total installation time adds up to a significant figure when you consider that we perform new installations on some 2,000 systems each year.” The Symantec Ghost Solution Suite has continued to make significant advances in terms of speed since it was first used at DATEV. Frank Günthör confirms this fact: “We naturally have to handle much more data now than we did even a couple of years ago, so that installation time has not been reduced in absolute terms. But today we can cope with a far greater volume of data in that same time.” It only takes around fifteen minutes to install the operating

## THE SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

### **Business Drivers**

- Provide reliable systems that guarantee access to important data at any time
- Implement efficient system recovery, in terms of both storage and recovery of the systems themselves
- Adopt efficient procedures to cover the new installation of software on some 2,000 desktops and laptops each year

### **Technical Challenges**

- Rapid and reliable system recovery
- Remote system restore
- Rapid and reliable PC software installation

### **Technology Environment**

- x86-based hardware platform

### **Symantec Services**

- Symantec Elite Service

## BUSINESS VALUE AND TECHNICAL BENEFITS

### **Efficiency**

- Maintained the ‘fastest possible’ recovery according to Harald Dazian
- Enabled the company to perform a remote system restore without leaving their workstations
- Allowed the company to cope with a far greater volume of data

### **Productivity**

- Stored PC operating systems, configurations and software as an image that can be subsequently implemented on PCs
- Provided access to each of the three computer center locations directly
- Saved valuable recovery time but also unnecessary work for administrators—even outside regular office hours
- Took only takes around fifteen minutes to install the operating system and application software
- Enabled the company to simplify the process of updating presentations promptly and reliably before visits to customers take place

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**Frank Günthör**

Head of PC-IT Technology, Mainline and Systems  
Management

system and application software. The administrator then needs another ten minutes to tweak the system to suit individual user requirements before it is ready to use.

“It is vital that we operate with an absolutely reliable software solution,” he says. He has never received any reports of installation errors. “And a good thing, too, as installation errors cost major time and effort and we have to do all we can to avoid them. You might have to search for ever before finding the problem.”

Use of the Symantec Ghost Solution Suite has proved especially practical for the sales team, whose job involves installing current versions of the DATEV software. In the course of this process, the DATEV sales representatives

are able to show customers a “live” product demonstration, often including individual sample figures. Because not all DATEV programs can be installed simultaneously on a single system, the presentations have to be updated promptly and reliably before visits to customers take place. This process may be relatively time-consuming, but is absolutely essential. “Symantec helps us here, too,” says Frank Günthör. “The Symantec Ghost Solution Suite enables us to greatly simplify this key procedure.” ■