

# City Biel (Bienne)

Switzerland

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## The IT department of the Biel municipality in Switzerland relies on transtec to upgrade its backup infrastructure

The Biel municipal administration previously relied on an Exabyte Mammoth tape robot to back up critical data. Unfortunately, this ageing unit was no longer servicable and as a consequence problems were common and it was necessary for the IT department to invest an inordinate amount of time and effort to ensure that backups could be

carried out. As Enrico Merlo, the man responsible for backups at the IT department, said, ***“Some of our employees were spending forty to seventy percent of their working hours making backups, replacing drives and cartridges and troubleshooting problems. It became clear that this system could not meet the demands of a modern IT infrastructure.”***

Biel was no longer willing to bear the financial burden imposed by the time and effort needed to keep the old backup system running.

The above considerations were underscored by an imminent migration to Windows XP and Windows 2003 Server operating systems.

### The IT department was therefore forced to look for a replacement for its out-of-date backup system.

In addition to providing much superior backup quality, the replacement should be faster and be easy to maintain. It was not until the maintenance agreement with the provider of the old system was cancelled that the full dimension of the maintenance problem was revealed: In the words of Enrico Merlo, ***“We calculated that, based on the projected savings in maintenance expenditures, the new transtec system would amortise within three years.”***

The new system consists of forty servers, two-thirds of which run under Windows Server 2003, with

remainder based on Hitachi Boot-On-SAN. Two Linux servers handle special applications. Backups are now made on a two-drive, 30-slot Overland NEO 2000 library. With this configuration the Biel municipality is now backing up roughly 340 GB daily. The system has a total capacity of 7 TB.

Expressing his satisfaction with the performance of the new system, Enrico Merlo said, ***“The new solution is far superior to the old one. There are now virtually no tape I/O errors, speed is much higher and the maintenance overhead is significantly lower.”***

Since the transtec system was installed there is considerably more confidence that, in the event of a crash, data will be restorable from backup tapes. Although the new system has been in place for only a few months, maintenance costs have dropped by at least two-thirds even though the same volume of data is being handled. The Biel municipality is considering acquiring a second NEO 2000 library when the capacity limits of the first one have been reached and in fact the availability of such an option played a role in the choice of the transtec solution.

## The situation

Biel, a Swiss town in the Bienne district of the canton Bern has 50,000 inhabitants and is the largest bilingual city in Switzerland. The municipal IT department services forty or so servers and is also responsible for a 600-unit PC pool. The town's municipal IT infrastructure is diversified – 180 different programs are in use and both hardware and users are spread over several locations.

## The solution

After carrying out a detailed analysis of its backup infrastructure at the end of 2004, the Biel IT department made a decision to upgrade. The upgrade project lasted from January to March of 2005, consumed 100 man-hours and resulted in an expenditure of 70,000 Swiss francs. transtec was selected as prime contractor. It was to supply the hardware, provide consultation and be responsible for maintenance. Hitachi SATA-based disk arrays and Atempo backup software were used in the implementation.

## The reason for transtec

Explaining the choice of transtec Enrico Merlo said, ***“Initially we considered acquiring a pure disk-to-disk solution. However, we were not convinced that this technology was mature enough and we therefore decided to go with a tape solution.”***

Several factors played a role in the decision to choose transtec as supplier. But the main considerations were transtec's high reliability; good after-sales support and its excellent references, as well as its market position, and of course the price. Expressing his appreciation of the reliability to the new solution, Mr Merlo said, ***“Now that the Overland library is in use I can take a holiday without worrying about what may happen in my absence and the same applies to the rest of the staff: we all know that if worse comes to worse backups can be restored without a hitch.”***

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