

# Case Study: MassHousing

## Double-Take® Software Customer Profile

*Company:* MassHousing  
*Business:* Affordable Housing Provider  
*Offices:* Massachusetts  
*Needs:* 24x7 data access, and support for a highly-complex IT infrastructure



## Business

The Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency, doing business as MassHousing, is the leading provider of affordable housing in Massachusetts. Since 1970, MassHousing has provided more than \$8.7 billion in financing for more than 80,000 units of mixed-income rental housing and over 43,000 mortgage loans for first-time home buyers.

MassHousing also strives to be the leading provider of affordable housing resources in Massachusetts. Its purpose is to provide home ownership and rental housing opportunities for Massachusetts residents with low and moderate incomes who are underserved by conventional housing markets.

## Customer Challenge

MassHousing had two fundamental challenges – 24x7 data access and support for a highly-complex IT infrastructure that includes SQL, Progress, Pervasive and Exchange, as well as a virtual environment featuring products from VMware. Within this environment, MassHousing stores the critical information it requires to do business. That information includes data on properties, personal finance (borrowers), lenders, as well as its own operations.

In the event of a system failure that prohibited access to data, MassHousing would not be able to provide any customer service, would be unable to transfer funds or share data with banks and would paralyze its own staff from completing its day-to-day work.

In other words, data loss would necessitate a virtual shut-down of operations.

MassHousing had traditionally relied upon tape-based back-up to protect itself from data loss. However, Thad Darcy, a user support specialist in MassHousing Computer Services Department feared that tape alone would be inadequate in terms of restoring data wholly and quickly.

MassHousing desired a new solution that:

- Complemented tape backup
- Supported virtual machines
- Restored data quickly, completely and reliably

To achieve these goals, MassHousing selected Double-Take® from Double-Take Software in April of 2005.

### **Double-Take Provides Peace of Mind**

Double-Take was tested by MassHousing and proved that it would help restore critical data far more quickly than tape.

Using tape alone, MassHousing would need to rebuild servers from scratch in the event of a data loss. Darcy estimates this would take 2-3 days. Likewise, he projects that restoring critical applications could take up to a full week.

Instead, leveraging the continuous data protection provided by Double-Take, a second copy of the data is always available. In the event that a production server goes down, users can be up and running again in no time. And for less severe disk outages, the production server can be rebuilt from the Double-Take replicated copy that is on disk for faster restore times and this is ensured to be only seconds older than the original data.

“With Double-Take, the restoration of data and applications is cut down to hours or less,” Darcy says. “It represents a tremendous advancement in disaster recovery and business continuity.”

### **Double-Take Protects Virtual Machines**

At the same time, Double-Take supports a virtual environment. Pioneered by VMware, server virtualization allows one physical platform to run multiple virtual machines simultaneously. In use at MassHousing, VMware ESX Server is virtual infrastructure software for partitioning, consolidating and managing systems in mission-critical environments. With its patented architecture, Double-Take meets the unique challenges of protecting virtual machines that are hosted on ESX Server, enabling customers to achieve high availability and easily recover from disaster within virtualized environments.

By combining Double-Take replication with VMware server virtualization products, MassHousing can also:

- Isolate data into secure locations and restrict unauthorized access
- Segment servers and data by business function
- Protect unique and sometimes conflicting applications on multiple servers to a single physical recovery server

“Currently, we have nine production servers replicating data to four ESX hosted virtual servers for disaster recovery purposes,” said Thad Darcy, user support specialist, at MassHousing. “Key features provided by Double-Take allow us to incorporate one-to-one and many-to-one source and target relationships, as well as replicate over a WAN, which, for our disaster recovery design, is indispensable. Utilizing Double-Take in conjunction with VMware enabled us to consolidate our disaster recovery environment and ensure a cost-effective approach to protecting our systems and data.”

For more information on leveraging VMware and Double-Take replication, please visit <http://www.doubletake.com/vmware>.

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### **About Double-Take® Software**

NSI Software, Inc. (NSI®) doing business as Double-Take® Software, provides the world's most relied upon solution for accessible and affordable data protection for Microsoft® Windows® applications. The Double-Take product is the standard in data replication, enabling customers to protect business-critical data that resides throughout their enterprise. With its partner programs and professional services, Double-Take delivers unparalleled data protection, centralized back-up, high availability, and recoverability. It's the solution of choice for thousands of customers, from SMEs to the Fortune 500 in the banking, finance, legal services, retail, manufacturing, government, education and healthcare markets. Double-Take is an integral part of their disaster recovery, business continuity and overall storage strategies. Double-Take Software is privately held and headquartered in Southborough, MA. For more information, please visit [www.doubletake.com](http://www.doubletake.com).

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