

# AMERICAN BANKER®

THE FINANCIAL SERVICES DAILY

Friday, July 25, 2003

## TECHNOLOGY

# Synovus Touts Data Centralization

**Synovus Financial Corp.** says centralizing its data storage management has helped it improve its disaster recovery capability, operate its disk drives more efficiently, and save money.

In July 2002 the Columbus, Ga., company began to switch from server-specific storage to the centralized approach, said **Kevin P. Gowen**, the director of network services for the \$21.3 billion-asset bank holding company, which is using SANsymphony storage networking software from **DataCore Software Corp.** of Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

"We're not all the way there," according to Mr. Gowen. "I don't know if there is a point at which you say, 'We're there.' I don't know if there is a destination."

A key factor in the decision to switch was the realization that software-based storage management is more flexible and less costly than management tied to proprietary hardware, he said in an interview this week. "It made the cost of entry much more attractive."

Synovus uses SANsymphony to centrally manage their storage area network, taking advantage of prior investments in disk drives and other data storage gear.

As Synovus has developed the network, in many cases it has been able to use less expensive equipment — sometimes as much as 75% less expensive — than it could otherwise, he said.

When Synovus began the conversion, an early priority was the credit data warehouse, which is used to analyze credit risk. Mr. Gowen said the process is "very

data intensive" and could take an entire weekend to run. SANsymphony, with its unique ability to speed up application performance, sharply reduced the time involved, enabling the bankers to produce their analyses in a matter of hours.

"It was somewhat unexpected," he said. "The performance translates into direct business benefits."

The new system also has improved Synovus' internal data backup system, which today contains 12 terabytes of storage at a separate data center. "When it comes to the backup piece in particular, it made more sense for that storage to be its own entity and located remotely for additional protection." Overall, he estimated that Synovus has 50 terabytes — or 50,000 megabytes — of data storage managed by the same software.

Previously, when the storage was directly attached to specific servers, it was difficult to move storage resources where they were needed; as a result, Synovus was only able to effectively use 40% to 50% of its storage capacity before having to buy more, he said. With easier and automated storage allocation software tools, Synovus now expects to be able to achieve 80% effective utilization of storage.

Synovus intentionally took an incremental approach to learn how to manage its technology in a different way, he said. "We picked some things where we knew we could gain some immediate benefit, and we could set our own speed." ■



www.datacore.com

Reprinted with permission of Thomson Media

One State Street Plaza • 26th Floor • New York, NY 10004 • (800) 367-3989