Q-Link™ Remote Library Manager

Background

System administrators responsible for operations located in the next building, across town or across the country have implemented a number of network and systems management tools that enable local control over their dispersed installations. These tools reduce or eliminate the need for expensive, scarce technical resources to be onsite to support each remotely located installation.

Systems at remote installations, however, require the same degree of data protection as the main corporate locations. Backup, storage management and offsite disaster recovery procedures are still required. Automated tape libraries are a key enabling technology to insure data protection.

Q-Link Concept

Q-Link is a web browser-based management tool that enables administrators to install, configure and monitor Qualstar TLS and RLS-Series Tape Libraries via a company intranet or over the internet from anywhere in the world.

Qualstar tape libraries have always given users complete control of all parametrics, configuration options and operations via the built-in front panel menu control system. Administrators, operators and field service technicians can access any function of the library. They can configure and monitor interfaces including: Fibre Channel, status of the tape drives, monitor component performance statistics. They can also operate: the onboard demonstrations, excercisers and diagnostics.

As complete as the front panel menu system is, however, it is constrained by the limits of the display itself, the key pad, and the need to be present at the library's physical location to enter information using the command buttons and to read the resultant display messages. Q-Link eliminates the need to be physically present at the library while still enabling every function of the menu system.

Extended Capability

Taking advantage of the inherent characteristics of its browser-based GUI architecture and the vastly better displays of computer monitors, Q-Link extends the capabilities of the library's menu system. New features include an interactive inventory display that graphically depicts the status of all cartridge storage locations and provides identification information about any tape in any slot or drive. Command line communications have been replaced by onscreen menus that display all relevant choices for a particular control element. Setting or changing configuration settings is as easy as checking a box on the screen. Tape drive configuration, serial number, firmware revision level, and other status information is readily available.

Q-Link will also notify an administrator or technical support engineer when an out-of-band event occurs. E-mail messages can be sent automatically whenever an unexpected condition is encountered, allowing proactive intervention before a failure actually takes place.

Simple and Secure

Any computer equipped with a network connection and a web browser can access Q-Link. The physical interface is common 10-baseT Ethernet. Connected to a network, the library generates an initial IP address, which can be modified to match the nomenclature of the site infostructure.

Username and password protection is built in to Q-Link. Graduated access can be granted to specific users depending on their needs, restricting control to those who really need it while denying it to those who are not authorized to change configuration elements.

Remote diagnostic control can be granted to enable support technicians to interact with the library as if they were standing in front of it when they may actually be half way around the world. Element status information, logs, diagnostics and exercisers can all be accessed to quickly define the problem and speed the resolution.

Summary

Tape libraries have long delivered the lowest storage costs compared to any other technology. Q-Link directly impacts total cost of ownership by reducing management costs, improving status information, and reducing downtime.