BackupAssist v8 Frequently asked questions

During the Beta release of BackupAssist v8, we received some great questions via email and through our distributer webinars. This FAQ draws on many of those questions, along with the answers provided by our team of developers.

Backup verification

1. **Can you start another backup job, while the backup verification is still running?**

   Other backups will not run during the backup verification, because the verification process is part of the backup job. Once the job (and its verification process) has completed, the next backup job will run. If you have enabled concurrent backups, they will run the same way they currently do.

2. **What happens during catalogue verification?**

   The verification process involves reading the backup catalogue, and taking the information from the catalogue to perform a restore simulation. The restore simulation will read the data as if it was doing a restore, but no actual restore takes place. For Hyper-V and Exchange, additional verifications can be performed, such as mounting a Hyper-V guest and checking an Exchange database - and these verifications also begin with reading the backup catalogue.

3. **How does backup verification work for File Archiving and Rsync backups?**

   For normal data (files, folders etc.), File Archiving and Rsync destination backups will be verified in the same way as other backup types.

   For Hyper-V and Exchange backups however, the process is different. File Archiving backups need to be uncompressed and Rsync backups need to be moved to a local host. This means both File Archiving and Rsync backups need to copy their data to a temporary location.

   This requires more time and space and is therefore not enabled by default. You must manually enable verification for File Archiving and Rsync backups of Exchange and Hyper-V Servers. You can also change the default temporary location used to perform this verification.

4. **How much space is required to verify a File Archiving or Rsync backup?**

   If you want to verify a File Archiving or Rsync backup of a Hyper-V or Exchange Server, the space required is equal to the size of the data. For example, if your Exchange Server has a 20 GB database, you will need to provide 20 GB of free space at the temporary location for the verification to run. After the verification, all data in the temporary location is deleted. For this reason, the temporary location's folder should only be used for backup verification.

   The temporary location is only required by File Archiving and Rsync destination backups. System Protection is our recommended backup type for Hyper-V and Exchange Servers.

5. **Can I manually trigger a backup verification at any time?**

   No, the backup verification process can only be run by a backup job at the end of a backup.

Custom schemes

6. Can the new custom scheme be used by all backup types?

The Custom schemes option is available for System Protection, File Protection and File Archiving.

Fast incremental image backups

7. With image tracking maintaining multiple snapshots, can you back up to multiple targets?

Image tracking uses multiple persistent snapshots on the backup destination to maintain a record of what data has changed in each backup. Knowing what data changed means incremental image backups can run faster because only added/changed data needs to be written.

Unfortunately, for fast incremental backups, the limitation is with the VSS snapshot on the data source (the data being backed up). This VSS snapshot is used to ensure consistent data is backed up, and you can only have one. This is in part due to the space taken up by the shadow storage that the snapshot uses to maintain historical information. This space would be quickly used up if multiple snapshots were maintained on the data source.

System requirements

8. With all of these new features, is there any change to BackupAssist's system requirements?

No, there is no change. As mentioned in the verification questions, you may have to allocate some additional disk space if you want to verify File Archiving or Rsync backups of Hyper-V or Exchange Servers. These verification selections are optional.

Improved Hyper-V backups

9. If I use Copy VSS Mode and select 1 guest, but have 4 other guests on the same volume, will all the guests be backed up anyway, because the backup is using a VSS of the whole volume.

If you use Copy VSS Mode and select a single Hyper-V guest but have other guests on the same volume, BackupAssist will only back up that single guest. This is because with Copy VSS Mode, there is no need to worry about having data cleaned up without being backed up. We only recommend Copy VSS Mode as a secondary backup or for test servers because, without a full backup, Hyper-V (or any VSS application) does not know if a full backup has been done.