OVERVIEW
The Greater London Authority (GLA) is the top-tier administrative body for Greater London, England, with a city-wide role to develop a better future for the capital. The agency works with the mayor of London and the London Assembly to develop and deliver plans that support London's economic, social, and environmental development. As part of that mission, the GLA provides IT services to the local government.

This task became significantly more challenging in 2012 — a banner year in London history that included such high-profile events as the mayoral election, the Royal Jubilee celebrations, and the London Olympic Games. These events, and the changing nature of the GLA, have led to a significant increase to the storage environment, increasing it to 60TB. GLA’s tape backup system became inadequate for disaster recovery (DR), and storage was getting tight.

OBJECTIVES
• Ensure ongoing data and service availability
• Cut local disaster recovery time from days to hours
• Establish an agency-wide storage plan to accommodate continued data growth

SOLUTION
GLA evaluated numerous vendors in search of a solution that was flexible, resilient, and cost-effective. GLA chose a solution from local storage integrator Cristie Data using data protection technology from FalconStor and storage from Nexsan. Working with Cristie Data, GLA implemented the disk-based product to replace its tape backup system. FalconStor NSS virtualizes the GLA’s storage environment and replicates data offsite to low-cost Nexsan storage, while enabling centralized management. RecoverTrac™ technology automates disaster recovery processes while application-aware snapshots ensure 100% transactional integrity.

A serious power outage in 2008 led to three days of downtime. With the FalconStor solution, any future outages will trigger automated recovery of the entire IT environment within hours. According to David Munn, who oversees GLA’s IT team, “this is the closest we can get to having a big red button that says: ‘In case of emergency, press here.”’

BENEFITS
• Cut recovery time from three days to four hours
• Saved nearly £90,000, with full ROI expected within four years
• Eliminated need to purchase additional SANs

“...the cost of downtime and data loss outweighs the cost of any data protection solution. With FalconStor NSS, we are prepared for the worst. I sleep more easily at night knowing that we can get our services back quickly. If a disaster strikes and the system is put into use, the project pays for itself instantly.”

– David Munn
Head of IT
Greater London Authority