

SOUTH JERSEY HEALTHCARE SIMPLIFIES BACKUPS,
SPEEDS DISASTER RECOVERY

“After installing EVault InfoStage, we saw results right away.

Where a backup used to take two hours before, it now took five minutes.
The whole backup process helped our operations manager sleep better at night.”

South Jersey Healthcare has never been afraid to deploy cutting-edge technology in order to achieve its goal: To deliver more efficient, high-quality care to the community it serves.

One of the first healthcare organizations in the country to deploy laptop computers, and to use wireless technology and wireless phones in place of intrusive, overhead speakers and paging systems for nurses and doctors, the hospital’s Information Systems team decided it was time to replace its awkward and time-consuming backup and disaster recovery procedures.

To back up several terabytes of data distributed across roughly 100 servers, the IS team found itself supporting over 20 different backup solutions, which had been deployed in accordance with each vertical application and the application vendors’ specific software and hardware recommendations. This required support for several different versions of Symantec NetBackup and CA ArcServe installed on various servers, plus different tape systems and tape formats on tape drives attached to individual servers.

As backups began taking over 24 hours to complete and multiple hours per night to manage, IS Director Francois Bodhuin knew it was time to look for a better way.

Goals

When the backup issue reached critical mass for the IS team, Bodhuin began looking for something that would simplify and centralize its current procedures.

“Out of 100 servers, we ended up having 15-20 different backup solutions, with different types of tapes and formats. It just got crazy!” said Bodhuin. “Then, we also began seeing backups running over 24 hours. Now we had an impossible task: Wanting to perform daily backups but being unable to do so because of how long they took to complete. That just didn’t make sense.”

Bodhuin and his team began to look for a disk-based backup solution that would allow them to achieve a number of initiatives the organization had identified:

- Reduce their backup windows to a manageable time period
- Simplify and unify the backup and recovery process by reducing the number of backup applications and hardware systems
- Replace tape-based backups with faster, disk-based backup technology
- Speed the restore process—for both individual files and whole servers

Customer Snapshot

Name

South Jersey Healthcare

Line of Business

Healthcare—Regional Hospitals/Medical Center

Location

Bridgeton, New Jersey

Product

EVault InfoStage® software, EVault InfoStage DualVault, plus Agent plug-ins for Microsoft Exchange Server, Microsoft SQL Server and Open File Manager

Configuration

100 servers—primarily Microsoft Windows, with some VMS, UNIX, IBM AIX, HP/UX and Linux servers

Capacity

9-10 TB of production data backed up each night

Goals

- Reduce backup window needed to complete jobs
- Consolidate and centralize backup processes across a heterogeneous IT environment
- Move from tape-based backup to disk
- Speed restores of single files and whole servers
- Streamline remote disaster recovery testing
- Reduce administrative oversight of backups

Challenges

- Backup jobs lasting over 24 hours
- Overwhelmed by 15-20 separate backup solutions
- Slow restore times
- Backup management requiring several hours per day

Solutions

EVault InfoStage streamlined the entire process, speeding both backups and restores.

Results

Backups are automated and completed in minutes instead of hours. User file restores are instantaneous. Remote DR testing is also streamlined.

- Reduce the time it took the operations team to manage backups
- Streamline offsite disaster recovery testing and the organization's remote recovery time objectives (RTO)

Challenges

Even though the healthcare organization's primary hospital information system is outsourced and managed through Siemens, the IS team is responsible for managing a variety of other, specialized applications housed on 100 servers situated at its Bridgeton, New Jersey facility. These include applications surrounding patient care, emergency care, PACS, accounting/general ledger and human resources. The IS team also oversees and manages more traditional back-office applications, including Microsoft Exchange 2003, Microsoft SQL Server 2003 and Sybase, and a variety of home directories associated with over 2,000 users throughout the organization.

The sheer amount of data began to grow into the 4-5 TB range and backup jobs for home directories and key applications began to exceed 24 hours. Something, obviously, had to change. "We have six people in operations (two per shift) with an operations manager, and 24x7 operations in the computer room. They are the ones taking care of backups," said Bodhuin. "I would estimate they were probably spending three to four hours a night monitoring backups with our old system, as well as a few hours during the day."

For an organization the size of South Jersey Healthcare, restores from tape were also taking way too long to complete. "We are probably asked to do restores once or twice a day where people mistakenly delete a file or their Exchange PST file gets corrupted. We have about 1,200 PCs and probably double the number of users, so things happen fairly often," said Bodhuin. Finding a way to make restores happen quicker was a definite must.

Besides consuming too much day-to-day management time, the sheer number of backup software applications, versions, and tape formats had also begun to pose serious challenges for South Jersey Healthcare's yearly disaster recovery tests. Depending on a 6 MB "pipe" connecting the Bridgeton facility with the organization's co-located facility in Philadelphia, Bodhuin admits it was pretty slow-going when his team would attempt restores of just one particular server over the 6 MB link. "In the years before we implemented EVault InfoStage, we had to prepare for our yearly disaster recovery test by taking roughly 10 different versions of ArcServe and NetBackup with us, then install different software for different systems. It was so difficult," he said. "When we tried to do restores from Philadelphia to our Bridgeton facility, it just didn't work."

After taking over three hours to restore one particular server from the organization's Philadelphia DR site, Bodhuin and his team recognized they had to do something else to significantly reduce the organization's unacceptable long recovery times.

Solution

As Bodhuin recalls, the CIO of the organization had been in prior contact with EVault and suggested the team take a closer look at what it could do. Once he contacted the company, it wasn't long before Bodhuin saw the potential benefits a solution like EVault InfoStage could offer his current infrastructure.

"EVault held a lot of appeal to us. The technology was solid. The price was decent. It gave us exactly what we were looking for at the time," he said.

Bodhuin liked the overall EVault InfoStage architecture and features that allowed them to perform fast



North America
877.382.8581

Canada
800.490.8638

Europe
United Kingdom
+44 (0) 1932 796 030

www.evault.com

backups to a disk-based “vault” that would be located at another hospital in the South Jersey Healthcare network. He also liked the way InfoStage used compression technology and incorporated its DeltaPro functionality to send just a fraction of the changed data blocks each day, as opposed to full data sets. “I liked the whole concept EVault was using: The fact that InfoStage did a seed first where the whole backup data was sent to the vault, then afterwards, it just had to perform differentials of changed data.”

After testing the EVault system and seeing how much faster they could now back up and restore their data, Bodhuin and his team scheduled an implementation at South Jersey’s Vineland facility. This took just a few days, with the help of an EVault support person, who personally oversaw all aspects of the process.

Results

Bodhuin recalls that the EVault implementation went extremely smoothly. “After installing EVault InfoStage, we saw results right away. Where a backup used to take two hours before, it now took five minutes. The whole backup process helped our operations manager sleep better at night,” he said.

Individual file restores could now be completed in a lightning-quick fashion. Bodhuin’s operations manager also noted it was taking a lot less time—both at night and during the day—to oversee backups. “I’d guess they probably spend maybe an hour a day on backups now,” said Bodhuin. Automated emails from EVault InfoStage indicate either success or failure with backup jobs, saving the team extra management time as well.

Equally important, EVault InfoStage offered a new option for the organization’s previously onerous annual DR tests. When Bodhuin and his team consulted with EVault prior to that year’s planned DR test, EVault recommended another alternative that would allow South Jersey Healthcare to remotely restore its systems in just a fraction of the time it had been taking. Using appliances to copy, then physically move the contents of the backup “vault” to its co-located DR facility in Philadelphia, Bodhuin’s IS team was able to restore an individual server in 20 minutes, as opposed to the prior three hours.

South Jersey Healthcare has been so pleased with its results with EVault InfoStage, it ordered a second InfoStage vault to support a new document imaging application coming online.

Knowing that solid technology is only as good as the support behind it, Bodhuin is confident in EVault’s continued ability to support his solutions. “I see it all in my position when it comes to vendors supporting their products— where you place a support call and receive no return call. With EVault, I can tell you the company’s support has been excellent, from pre-sales to technical support,” he said. “Once you are their customer, there’s a relationship. I like that and have always been impressed. They just go out of their way to make things easy for us.”

When asked his advice for other healthcare organizations that battle the same backup/restore issues his team had, Bodhuin has just one question: “What are you waiting for? Seriously, once you’ve made the switch, you go, ‘Wow! Why did we wait so long?’” For those looking at disk-based backup technologies like those offered by EVault, he recommends measuring the impact on all the backup and restores you currently perform. Then, he says, “Take a look at the EVault solution and see how much time you can save, in both hard and soft dollars.”



North America
877.382.8581

Canada
800.490.8638

Europe
United Kingdom
+44 (0) 1932 796 030

www.evault.com