

Reduced Risk, Reduced Back Up Window and Future Growth



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Richard Bates, Infrastructure Manager,
Warwick District Council.



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Warwick District Council provides a wide range of services, including benefits, council tax, electoral registration, housing and tourism to a population of some 124,000 local residents. It covers 28,253 hectares of Warwickshire, UK, and came into existence in 1974 through the reorganisation of local government.

Flood risk

The main offices of the council are at Riverside House, Leamington Spa, UK. As the name suggests, this building is located on the banks of the local river, which although very picturesque, could put it at risk of flooding in extreme weather situations. In the past, flood water has entered the car park and it could reach the building if the water levels rise high enough, potentially causing great damage to the ground-floor computer room. It was a concern to the council that no solution was in place to recover quickly from this potential problem or any other possible disaster, such as a ground-floor fire.

Long backup windows

Added to this need for a disaster-recovery solution, the council also required an upgrade to its tape backup solution.

Its three entry-level HP StorageWorks MSL tape libraries, featuring 200 Gigabytes (GB) of compressed capacity per tape, were no longer coping with the massive volumes of data the council was now producing, as Richard Bates, Infrastructure Manager at Warwick District Council explains; **“With the MSL libraries, our backup window had reached capacity. Our data had been growing and growing, especially on our document management system and file server, and we were struggling to back it all up within the window.”**

So, with one eye on this and the other on its disaster-recovery requirement, the council turned to HP Preferred Partner, OCSL, for a solution that could tackle both challenges.

Best-fit solution

At around the same time, the council was about to replace its current production array, an HP StorageWorks Enterprise Virtual Array 3000 (EVA3000), with a higher capacity StorageWorks EVA because it required more storage for its data-intensive document management system.

OCSL proposed that, rather than make it redundant, the EVA3000 should be re-deployed within a new disaster-recovery room on the third floor. Here, it would receive replicated copies of production data from the existing EVA5000 over a Fibre Channel connection. Should a disaster occur downstairs, the council’s IT services could simply switch over to the healthy EVA3000 and continue operations.

OCSL also provided the software licences required for data replication: HP StorageWorks Business Copy, which takes automatic snapshots of data at scheduled times, and HP StorageWorks Continuous Access software, which replicates these snapshots up to the EVA3000.

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Faster backup

To overcome the problem of slow backups, a new HP StorageWorks EML Tape Library E-Series 103e Tape Library featuring faster 800GB HP FC Ultrium 960 LTO tape drives was deployed. This has provided significant improvements as Bates confirms; **“Previously, it was taking 23 hours to back up 480GB of data on our file server. With the new HP StorageWorks EML library, we can back up 925GB in just 9 hours – and our Microsoft Exchange environment completes in just 19 minutes. The EML rarely uses more than one of its three drives and finishes all backups well within the backup window – so there’s plenty of room for future growth as well.”**

The Fibre Channel connectivity of the EML tape library is a distinct advantage. Along with extra speed, it means backups can be performed from the safety of the disaster-recovery room upstairs, which ensures data can be recovered as quickly as possible, **“If the tape drives were involved in a fire, it would take days, if not weeks, to configure them properly for recovery. By locating them in the disaster-recovery room, we’ll be able to cut the lead time considerably and start recovery immediately.”** adds Bates.

Further benefits come from the switch to HP OpenView Storage Data Protector complete with a three year 24x7 HP support service. The previous Veritas Netbackup Client based software was licensed on a client basis, and covered only 33 of the council’s 50+ servers. Data Protector is licensed per tape drive and covers an unlimited number of clients, which provides significant cost savings while also increasing the number of clients that can be backed up.

Future innovation

Warwick District Council can now complete its backups on time and take peace of mind that it will be able to recover quickly and effectively from a disaster, should one occur, as Bates concludes, **“The HP StorageWorks EVA disk arrays and EML tape library, together with the Fibre Channel infrastructure, are all extremely reliable – and with technology like data replication, I can rest a lot easier, knowing that we can cope with a disaster should it happen.”**

Looking forward, the technology is in place for further improvements. By backing up replicated snapshots on the EVA3000, rather than on the production EVA disk array, the council could eliminate its need for a backup window entirely.

Plus, if it wanted to move to a full external data replication solution with data being replicated to another building, the hard work, with the help of HP and OCSL, has already been done.



Why partner with OCSL

OCSL has been assisting organisations to maximise their IT investment for over 15 years. Our world-class partnerships with organisations like HP, Cisco and Oracle means that we have the knowledge to look at your IT estate with fresh but experienced eyes.

Our specialist areas include server consolidation, SAN deployments, creating integrated backup strategies and tailored support contracts. So you can rest assured that you are in safe hands.

Installed and supported by the infrastructure experts

You can feel reassured that partnering with OCSL brings you immediate expertise and on-going support. OCSL are a highly accredited HP partner and one of just a handful of ASMP (Authorised Service Management Partners), for HP. This means that backed by HP, OCSL can tailor an exact support solution to meet your needs from 4 hour on site response to ship to site for disaster scenarios.

What to do next

We'd welcome the opportunity to be benchmarked against your current suppliers because we know OCSL can offer you smarter alternatives – that's why our customers include well-known organisations like Sanofi Aventis, Allianz Cornhill and Williams F1.

Simply contact the team on 0845 6052100, email info@ocsl.co.uk or visit the web site at www.ocsl.co.uk



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