

## Case Study

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Bracknell Forest Borough Council  
deploys CommVault as part of an  
ongoing programme to introduce and  
support future technologies

**SIMPANA**



### Customer Profile

**Bracknell Forest Borough in central Berkshire, UK encompasses six parishes: Bracknell Town, Binfield, Crowthorne, Sandhurst, Warfield and Winkfield. According to the Office of National Statistics it has an estimated population of 110,100.**

The Borough Council has 3,200 staff and annual revenues of £150m. In December 2003 it began a period of reform, announcing a number of objectives to revitalise Bracknell.

Fifteen medium-term objectives were identified that underpin 98 specific action points the Borough intends to achieve by May 2007. As part of this initiative, the council took the opportunity to review its storage and archive IT infrastructure.

### The Challenge

The Borough, being a unitary council, generates a large amount of data which needs to be stored in a manageable and searchable form. When the project began, a full backup took the system 24 to 36 hours to complete. Restores of data took a further 24 hours to complete.

Bracknell's main IT objective was to reduce its backup window and lessen the number of staff hours involved in managing, monitoring, and restoring emails, documents and other critical data.

As a government body, the council must adhere to strict compliance and data protection regulations, responsibilities that are only likely to grow. Regular audits also mean that the council must be able to comply, and provide information, quickly.

Bracknell decided that it would be necessary to upgrade its systems. The five year old technology it was using could not scale to meet its needs and necessitated significant investments in tape to complete backups. According to Richard Dawson, IT Services Manager, it "required a lot of babysitting."

In the first phase of its implementation the council began the search for a new storage technology that would require fewer tapes, reduce costs and simplify administration. As the council began searching for a storage solution it knew precisely what platform it would need to run on and what it would need to support in the future. Importantly, it also needed to find a provider that could support its existing systems, and the planned introduction of new technologies. This specified a need for a system that supported replication, with two media servers, two tape drives and a 12TB disk unit to provide fail-over support.

Bracknell decided to replace its existing backup system as the vendor was unable to support Novell Netware. The council ran a number of pilots with storage vendors, but none met its needs. Then, during a four-week pilot of CommVault Galaxy software, Bracknell found a solution that ran smoothly and, according to Dawson, "moved quickly."

Dawson says, "We needed to know that Novell Netware would be supported, as well as Linux and Solaris. The chosen system had to have a wide breadth of capabilities. We looked at a number of solutions from different providers, but only found one that met our needs. CommVault offered open backup technology and support for Novell Groupwise, Oracle and SQL. This was not offered so comprehensively by other vendors."

The second phase of CommVault implementation saw Bracknell migrate its entire backup operations to CommVault software.

### The Solution

Bracknell decided on a combination of Galaxy Backup & Recovery and Data Archiver solutions, which provide it with data protection, storage management, active data migration and administrative control. Bracknell looked at the systems carefully, going with CommVault to reference sites, and working with its consultants to design the initial specifications before starting installation. Eight weeks after the start of the pilot, Bracknell confirmed the new architecture and installation performed as specified.

A few minor challenges arose during the installation, but Dawson reports these were overcome quickly and resolved efficiently. A support contract with CommVault guarantees that these and any other emerging problems will always be resolved.

The use of synthetic backups let Bracknell reduce its backup window, and make it more comprehensive. It implemented incremental backups during the week, combining them after seven days to create a full backup.

Dawson said that the systems are checked every day to ensure backups have completed. Dawson also noted that "the reporting tools have also greatly reduced administration. The automated reporting function is a vast improvement on the previous paper based checks that we had to refer to."

Dawson added, "Previously there was lots of babysitting involved, now that's automated." The easy to use reporting functions and e-mail alerts offered by CommVault were two of the reasons Bracknell selected the solution. Although the reports go into great detail, their simple user interface and graphical representations can be understood by less technical users. Failed backups are displayed with a red indicator on a visual display. Previously, administrators would have to review and correct printed reports.

According to Dawson, it was also important that the system had a resilient disaster recovery plan. Dawson said that the council had recently completed a backup trial of this feature, taking a blank system down and installing a CommVault one in just three hours. "It performs well for both disaster recovery and business continuity," he added

### The Results

Because of the daily backups from Galaxy, Bracknell realised immediate benefits from the system. Administration time associated with backups has been reduced and the system can perform a full restore in less than ten minutes. Data Archiver writes the data onto disk and then copies it to tape. Tapes are kept off site and the disks on site. As a result, the council has found that its storage costs have fallen. It requires fewer tapes which, at £70 per unit, were an expensive concern.

Alasdair Kilgour, managing director at CommVault UK, says, "Councils are charged with managing a lot of public information, all of which needs to be quickly accessible - on demand - due to existing regulations. CommVault has helped Bracknell improve its systems, decrease its administration and increase efficiency, whilst also saving money. Galaxy will let the organisation grow the system as its needs grow, providing more flexibility. At the start of the implementation CommVault was also able to get the system up and running within a very short period of time."

CommVault Galaxy has helped boost confidence amongst those using the new system and monitoring data. When the council has experienced a backup issue, it has been a minor one which has also been easy to solve. Stability of the system has also increased. Dawson concludes, "We are currently saving three man days a week just on backup."

## Quick Facts

### Industry/Solution:

- Government

### Platform/File System:

- Microsoft Windows 2003
- Novell NetWare 6.5 and Novell GroupWise 7
- Sun Solaris

### Applications:

- Microsoft SQL Server
- Oracle

### Partner Hardware:

- Dell

### Challenges:

- Improve its backup and data file storage
- Improve data restoration
- Protect and control its data management from a single point

### Solution:

- CommVault Galaxy Backup & Recovery
- Synthetic Full Backup

### Benefits:

- Data more efficiently managed
- Compliance and data protection improved
- Is ready for future expansion
- Enables faster backups and data restoration
- Improved disaster recovery and business continuity plan

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