

With Galaxy, Cambridge Health Alliance Consolidates Four Backup Solutions Into One, Sees Payoff in “People Time”

QUICK FACTS

Industry/Solution:

- Integrated healthcare delivery system focused on community health and community service

Platform/File System:

- Microsoft Windows NT Servers
- Linux
- Sun Solaris

Applications:

- Microsoft Exchange Server 5.5/2000
- Microsoft SQL Server 6.5/7.0/2000
- Microsoft SMS Server 2.0
- Meditech Client Server 5.2
- MSM medSurg for Windows
- MSM medQM for Windows
- EpicCare Electronic Medical Records System

Partner Hardware:

- Compaq Proliant DL380G2 (dual Pentium III processors and 1024 MB of RAM)
- HP SureStore Ultrium 6/60 (expandable to 10/100) LTO Library
- ADIC FastStor DLT 7000 Library
- Compaq TL881DLX / T891DLX DLT Library

Challenges:

- Cambridge Health Alliance needed to select a new backup vendor to consolidate most or all of the four backup solutions they had in place.

Solution:

- CommVault Galaxy Backup & Recovery

Benefits:

- Ability to consolidate four backup solutions into one
- Economy resulting from human resource savings
- Strong technical support
- Ease of recovery
- Ease of installation
- Ease of use

Customer Profile

Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA) is a full service, “cradle to grave,” healthcare system focused on community health and community service. The seventh largest healthcare system in Massachusetts, it has annual revenues of over \$400 million. The organization includes a primary full-service hospital (The Cambridge Hospital, a Harvard Medical School-affiliated teaching hospital), two full-service satellite hospitals, an inpatient psychiatric unit, and approximately 50 outpatient clinics and additional business sites. Site sizes range from The Cambridge Hospital campus to single-office, one-person sites.

Data Drives the Business

CHA has a large IT infrastructure, including approximately 130 servers and 2,200 PC's. The network topology is hub-and-spoke with almost all information resources centralized in the Data Center, which also serves as the network core/hub. Operating systems supported include Windows NT, Windows 2000, Linux, and Solaris. Meditech Client Server is the primary clinical software application on the system. It contains the great majority of all patient data, including lab results, radiology data, and physicians' notes, and is particularly critical to smooth delivery of patient care.

The data on their computer systems is critical to Cambridge Health Alliance's operations. “Everything, including billing, clinical data, lab results, and patient data is on the system,” says Seth Sladek, Manager of Systems Engineering in the IT department at CHA. “Data drives the business. Our Health Care Information System (HCIS) drives everything, and we need the data to be good. That's why backup is so important.”

Data Management Challenges

In 2002, CHA needed to select a new backup vendor to consolidate the four backup solutions they had in place:

1. Enterprise backup software, running on servers in the data center at The Cambridge Hospital, backing up the major clinical software environments, user environments, and SQL databases, and some clients on the Wide Area Network.

2. A small departmental backup solution that handled some remote site servers, backing up to dedicated tape drives.
3. A nightly xcopy process that copied information from smaller remote servers to a single server in the data center, which in turn was backed up by the Enterprise backup solution.
4. Native NT backup, used on one server that the Enterprise backup solution was unable to handle within the NTFS file system.

Their goal was to significantly reduce the staff time required to administer and maintain what Seth Sladek refers to as “the collection of Mickey Mouse backup solutions we had in place. We needed to invest in a software solution that would leverage our human resources.”

Besides the need to consolidate, Cambridge Health Alliance had a number of reliability and performance issues with their Enterprise backup product. The database required too much “care and feeding.” It had to be shut down daily to run corruption checks, which usually ran into the backup window. In spite of these efforts, the database became corrupted two or three times a year. Attempts to recover following recommended procedures were never successful. “When that happened, we would have to rebuild the whole database from scratch,” says Sladek. “That happened about three times a year, and it cost us about three days to rebuild each time. That's nine days. But someone would always need to restore a file in the middle of the re-build, so that would delay it. So I round it up to ten days, or two weeks.”

Evaluation Results in Choice of Galaxy

CHA issued a Request For Proposal, followed by an extensive evaluation of several vendors. “One of the things I like about CommVault is their ‘no BS’ attitude,” says Sladek. “During the evaluation, we had another software vendor who couldn't explain why the backup was running slow on some servers. They were making excuses and saying it was something wrong with the network. We brought in our network guys, and they said ‘that's bogus’, and the vendor never explained what the problem was. Let's say that vendor voted

themselves out of contention. In contrast, we know CommVault is serious about our business. When we run into a technical issue, their field people call New Jersey and find the right person who can answer the question. We always get an answer."

At the conclusion of the evaluation, Cambridge Health chose CommVault Galaxy, based on its ability to consolidate four backup solutions into one, and the significant human resource savings that would result. In addition, Galaxy delivered the ease of use, performance, and reliable technical support CHA needed.

Consolidation Yields Savings

"It's rare that you look at a product and its benefits are immediately apparent," says Sladek, "but with CommVault the benefits are apparent." The most apparent benefit has been the fact that CommVault lets CHA take four different backup solutions and combine them into one solution. "We have one solution that runs in all our environments, including Windows, Linux, and Solaris. We have collapsed it all to one central point of control," says Sladek. "That's a big time saver. We save people," says Sladek. "Galaxy is good ROI for our department. With the current realities of IT, we can't hire an extra person. This is another way to go, and Galaxy is a perfect example of the kind of tools that let you do that. For example, in the old days, if we had to recover a database, we had to get all the tapes and re-scan them into the database, mount the tape, and give a command to read back into the database. It was a nightmare. With CommVault, doing restores is easy, and we save all that people time.

Sladek can clearly quantify the economic benefits of the Galaxy software. "Based on my experience with software products, and adding up all the various places where consolidation with Galaxy saves us time, we will recover the entire purchase price of the CommVault Galaxy software in a year."

Reliable Solution Saves Time

"Reliability issues were a big part of why we went with Galaxy," relates Sladek. "CommVault

uses MS SQL, an industry standard back-end database. SQL contains all the tools for maintaining the application database online. During our Galaxy evaluation, we saw that upgrades go smoothly, that it is a smooth process to recover from a disaster. In all the tests, there was no problem recovering our MS SQL database with Galaxy. That means we are not going to waste days rebuilding the database from scratch."

Ease of Use is an "ROI Benefit"

"Setting up and using Galaxy is very easy," Sladek reports. "You can give Galaxy to a person off the street and they can set it up." Sladek finds that it is easier to restore with CommVault Galaxy than with other systems. "The first time I saw a Galaxy demo, I could do a restore myself, with no help. It's very intuitive. When he works with Galaxy, the guy who's responsible for our backups has a smile on his face! That's a complete 180° from our previous vendor. One of our next goals is to have the HELP desk do restores over our Intranet through the Galaxy browser, so our people don't even have to get involved. That's another ROI type of benefit. Our people don't have to do it, so we don't have to have someone standing by."

Better Reporting Save "A Quarter of a Day Every Day"

Sladek describes CommVault Galaxy's reporting capabilities as, "The best I've ever seen. It's really, really good, totally automated, loads of standard reports, and they work fine. In the past, we had to have an operator go through log after log, fill out a spreadsheet, and email it to people. All a manual process; it took two hours per day. Galaxy does it all automatically. So I just got back two hours per day, a quarter of a day every day." Currently, Cambridge Health uses all standard reports. "I don't know if there's any need to do any custom reports," explains Sladek. "The other backup software vendors are still back at the 'look at the logs' stage."

Backup of Remote Sites

The Cambridge Health system includes about 60 remote sites on the WAN. About 20 are

single-user sites they only back up locally. However, about 40 sites are backed up across the WAN. Many of those sites have a relatively slow T1 connection on the WAN. With the previous backup software, it was difficult to get reliable backups over the WAN at T1 speed, because there was no way to lock the backup onto a single port. That meant that a backup would sometimes hog all the bandwidth, and there was no way to control it. That meant failed backups and wasted administrative time. The CommVault Galaxy solution consistently runs backup on three to five ports. If the backup runs into the day, the user can scale back the amount of bandwidth it uses. "We can tune the backup bandwidth so we can also get our other stuff done," reports Sladek. "That's a big benefit, a big time savings."

"Great Experience with CommVault Galaxy"

When CHA started looking for a new backup solution, CommVault one of the first places they turned to, based on their very positive experience using Galaxy to back up their Microsoft Exchange email system, which consists of two MS exchange servers and about 2,500 PCs, supporting some 4,500 Exchange users. "We had great experience with CommVault Galaxy," says Sladek. "We've never had a major problem. The support has been great. They work with us to resolve issues if they come up. We recently had a problem caused by a piece of anti-virus software messing up Exchange. CommVault tech support helped us figure it out. Our guy who was working with the Exchange application said 'Let's look into using CommVault for the enterprise backup solution'."

Investing in CommVault Solutions

"Our enterprise system is constantly growing," says Sladek. "Two or three years ago, the previous solution might have been adequate, but it no longer was. We needed something better. It took too much staff time, and we have limited staff. We need to make investments in products that maximize our staff resources. That's what CommVault does; that's the beauty of CommVault."

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