University of Kent Streamlines Data Backup Process and Accelerates Restores with BakBone NetVault®: Backup

FAST FACTS

Customer
University of Kent
www.kent.ac.uk

Industry
Education

Challenges
Streamlining backup strategy and accelerating backups

OS Environments
Mixed

Solution
NetVault: Backup Enterprise version

Benefits
Cut backup management time, delegated backup and restore jobs to the operations team, achieved faster restores, and protected the investment

"With NetVault: Backup it really is a case of point-and-click. It has cut down administration times dramatically."

— Ian Carter, IT administrator at the University of Kent

The Company

The University of Kent was founded in 1965 and today is home to over fifteen thousand students and a first-class research institute, where 81% of staff work in departments which contain research of national or international levels of excellence. Its honorary students include Joanna Lumley, Jo Brand, and Bob Geldof among others. The main campus is The University of Kent at Canterbury covering 300 acres just over a mile from Canterbury's city centre. The university includes three faculties (humanities, social sciences, and science, technology and medical studies) and a total of 20 departments such as the school of European culture and languages, the Kent institute of medicine and health sciences, the centre for music technology, and the centre for sports studies.

The Challenge

The University of Kent's IT staff must ensure the integrity of the network as well as the flow and protection of all data on the system. As a result a solid data protection policy is paramount; however, managing the legacy setup was too cumbersome a process. More importantly, restoring data was far too painful as this steadily grew and the backup window available to run backup jobs ended up being virtually non-existent. With thousands of users including students, staff and researchers, the IT staff needed to streamline their data protection policy management and speed up backups. In order to achieve this the team needed to find a solution that would enable them to easily and quickly back up three terabytes (TB) of data (the equivalent of 3,000 copies of the Encyclopaedia Britannica) spread across 42 mixed clients.

The Solution

Schools and universities need data protection solutions that offer the right combination of flexibility, ease-of-use, reliability and cost-effectiveness; the University of Kent quickly realised that BakBone's NetVault: Backup was the answer. The University's IT department was particularly attracted by NetVault's Backup virtual disk library (VDL) capabilities. Without the need for a lengthy backup window, this feature allows users to run incremental data backups to disk overnight and then migrate the data off to tape for long-term retention and archival purposes over the course of the day. Some of the information created by the institute's research users might one day make a difference to the world and hence it is of paramount importance that this data is protected and readily retrievable in the case of a disaster.

However, an integrated backup software solution is only ever half of the equation. The other half is to test it regularly to ensure the absence of glitches should the University suffer a major data loss. 'We test NetVault: Backup on a regular basis. This is absolutely mandatory if we are to be confident that we can get the University back up and running in the event of a major catastrophe. The fact that NetVault: Backup is easy to use and manage on a daily basis helps us in this aim; it really is a case of point-and-click,' says Ian Carter, IT administrator at the University of Kent. 'And given that the software looks and feels exactly the same whether you are running it on a Solaris client machine or on the Windows 2003 backup server, we don't need to go on multiple training courses to learn how to use the solution. It has cut down administration times dramatically."

For data protection, disaster recovery and business continuity, the NetVault: Backup product line provides enterprise-class data protection for complex heterogeneous environments, regardless of size. NetVault: Backup's flexible, modular architecture delivers proven reliability and high-performance, with an unmatched combination of features designed to meet current and future data protection needs. This

unique flexibility reduces deployment costs and TCO by enabling users to implement a NetVault: Backup solution that matches their current system and network resources. The solution allows users to enjoy disk to disk backup, true cross platform protection, unlimited scalability, command line interface and media management, which provides a comprehensive media/tape management system for enterprise-wide open platform systems.

The University of Kent also makes use of NetVault: Backup's user level access (ULA), a standard feature that allows the NetVault administrator to delegate specific tasks and responsibilities to other personnel.

The Benefits

Thanks to BakBone the University dramatically cut the time spent managing the backup process. Before deploying NetVault: Backup the IT staff often spent hours swapping, cataloguing and archiving tapes. With BakBone the entire download, installation, and first backup only took a few minutes. Even the VDL was up and running in no time. In addition, restoring files is now a much faster procedure because the team does not need to search through multiple tapes in order to find specific data. The IT department has a clear mandate to make sure all data can be restored with the shortest possible delay and by using NetVault: Backup's VDL feature they can now offer that service.

But the benefits realised thanks to NetVault: Backup do not stop here. Thanks to the ULA feature the University's IT staff has managed to significantly increase the department's productivity by delegating the backup and restore jobs to the operations team. Moreover as they can easily add to their licenses as

the IT setup grows, the initial investment in the software is protected as there is no need to purchase a different solution since NetVault: Backup scales very easily to supports business growth, thus improving TCO.

"We really like how you can download the software, install it and have your first backups occurring within a matter of minutes. We had a virtual disk library up and running within fifteen minutes. The ULA feature has allowed us to significantly increase the department's productivity. We found that NetVault: Backup was priced at the right level and we know that our initial investment in the software is protected."

— Ian Carter, IT administrator at the University of Kent

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