

Walsall Council Customer Success Story



"Walsall Council has a strategic vision that will transform the way it delivers services. The effectiveness of our IT solutions underpins this initiative, and making sure we plan for future needs now, particularly in terms of data storage, is vital for successful delivery of the council's vision."

*– Stephen Crutchley
computer officer
Walsall Council*

Walsall Council turns to tape technology to backup transformation

Transforming Walsall: Council sets out its mission

Walsall Council has a clear vision of where it wants to be and has set itself challenging targets to transform the services it provides for local residents.

The council serves over a quarter of a million residents in the Black Country area of the West Midlands and technology lies at the heart of the authority's strategy to transform its services.

From making local services available online around the clock to improving public access to information and demographic data, modernising the council's IT infrastructure is the key to enabling it to put its resources firmly behind its citizens' priorities.

The information challenge

With a number of initiatives already underway, an increase in public services being made available online and greater numbers of electronic users to contend with, Walsall Council found it was generating considerable levels of data which needed to be managed and stored in a logical, easily accessible and extensible way. Last year, one project alone generated 7 Terabytes (TB) of data, with an expected growth of up to 21TB by 2008.

The launch of 24-hour public services on the Internet also created an additional technology challenge for Walsall by reducing the available window for data backup and archiving. The council also faced the additional pressure of complying with the Freedom of Information Act which gives all citizens the right to access archived information held by the public sector.

Stephen Crutchley, computer officer and system administrator of the Network Appliance Storage says: "Computer room staff were spending up to two hours a day moving storage tapes to keep up with the volume of data being generated.

"Our team resources were being diverted from essential IT projects to time-consuming processes which we needed to nip in the bud, fast."

Introducing a scaleable storage solution for organic data growth

With the need to centralise its data storage and introduce scalable capacity for organic information growth, Walsall turned to its IT partner Cognitive Network Solutions which recommended implementation of Quantum's PX720 enterprise tape library as its main backup, recovery and archiving system.

Crutchley adds: "We've worked with Solutions for a number of years and this was an occasion where their expertise and understanding of our needs helped us to lay down an expandable infrastructure for data protection which would serve us now and in the future."

The PX720 can accommodate between one and 20 tape drives and was configured for Walsall with four LTO-2 tape drives, integrated with 44 backup servers across the authority and managed using Symantec's VERITAS NetBackup 5.1 Enterprise data protection software.

"With the increasing number of IT projects being launched at Walsall, we needed a storage solution which could deliver the shortest possible backup window," said Crutchley.



KEY BENEFITS

Return on Investment:

- Approximately three years to full payback of infrastructure investment

Cost Savings:

- Estimated 12 percent reduction in operating costs for storage infrastructure

Information Availability:

- Estimated 25 percent reduction in time to access archived information from tape

Operational Efficiency:

- Estimated 10 percent reduction in staff hours required to manage information storage

Scalability:

- Annual growth estimated at one terabyte

“We also needed the scalability to grow our backup and archive capacity without compromising availability of the data. The PX720’s ‘Capacity on Demand’ feature works perfectly for us, by enabling us to increase our capacity whenever we need to.”

Business benefits for Walsall Council

The Quantum PX720 has enabled Walsall Council to establish a centralised data storage system for a number of new projects and has the ability to scale capacity up to 3,600 media slots or up to 290TB of data.

Backup efficiency has improved through quick and easy installation of the modular LTO-2 tape drives with the PX720 library. Backup administration has now been centralized, resulting in a 25

percent reduction of access to archived information. Furthermore, the data is instantly available through the web interface, which has reduced the staff resources required to manage the backup process by an estimated three hours a week.

Future plans

The council currently operates a large number of Windows NT servers with localised backup to tape drives. In the future, it plans to transfer backup of all its existing servers to the PX720 using VERITAS NetBackup Enterprise. This project will completely centralise Walsall’s storage, improve operational efficiency and deliver additional savings by scaling capacity as storage requirements increase without having to invest in additional tape libraries.

SOLUTION OVERVIEW

- Quantum PX720 Enterprise Tape Library
- HP LTO-2 Tape Drives (x4)
- Symantec’s VERITAS NetBackup Enterprise 5.1
- Backup server OS: Windows NT
- McDATA Fibre switches

About Quantum

Quantum, a global leader in storage, delivers highly reliable backup, recovery and archive solutions that meet demanding requirements for data integrity and availability with superior price/performance and comprehensive service and support. In addition to its DLTape™ technology-based tape drives and media, Quantum offers a broad portfolio of tape autoloaders and libraries and disk-based backup systems.



Walsall Council

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