Case Study

Hewlett Packard Enterprise

Notre Dame finds HPE VM Explorer fast and affordable

Prestigious school in Surrey, England protects 5 TB of data on more than 30 virtual servers

Objective
Notre Dame needed a cost-effective and reliable virtual machine (VM) backup and recovery solution for storing, managing, and searching its fast-growing library of student and staff data

Approach
Install one instance of HPE VM Explorer Pro Edition to back up staff and student data along with a back of each virtual server

IT Matters
- Easy to configure and run
- Automatically backs up data during weekends and non-school hours
- Performs frequent incremental backups to efficiently protect new data

Business Matters
- Straightforward, affordable pricing model
- Frees IT staff to focus on other tasks
- Single VM backup solution to back up personal and shared drives for staff and students

Based in Cobham, Surrey, a picturesque village southwest of London, Notre Dame is an independent Catholic preparatory and senior school for girls. Founded in 1937, the school is linked to the Sisters of the Company of Mary, Our Lady, a religious order with roots in 17th century France that has a special focus on education for young women. The school is situated on 17 acres of parkland, in the middle of which sits historic Burwood House.

The challenge

Backing up vital educational data
Virtualization gives organizations a convenient way to maximize the returns on their hardware investment. With programs like VMware® vSphere® and Microsoft® Hyper-V®, they can host multiple applications and operating systems on a single physical server, allowing them to access more of their computing and storage capacity.

However, organizations with multiple virtual machines (VMs) require sophisticated server backup solutions to back up and recover

"With HPE VM Explorer, we've found a simple and quick way to back up all of our servers. It's cost-effective and easy to use."

– David Colpus, IT Manager, Notre Dame School

data, especially when stored across separate servers. Often, these enterprise-level solutions are too expensive or technically demanding for smaller organisations.

Notre Dame has about 600 students who use 400 desktop computers throughout the school. Senior students also bring their own laptops and other devices to the campus, adding to the complexity of its technology environment. The school has three HPE ProLiant DL380 Servers at the core of its IT system, each of which runs up to 10 VMs.

According to the school's IT Manager, David Colpus, Notre Dame needed a practical and cost-effective backup and recovery for these VMs that have more than 5 TB of application data from administrative applications, educational documents from students' work folders, and an extensive library of photos.

"We needed to ensure that our data was as secure as possible," says Colpus. "We were also having some issues with our existing backup solution."

Solution and benefits

Reliable and convenient backup
Notre Dame implemented HPE VM Explorer in 2014 and now uses the software to perform regular full backups of all of its data, as well as more frequent incremental backups. The school backs up to local storage capacity within its HPE DL380 servers, as well as to a legacy central network-attached storage (NAS) device.

Using the Scheduler function, Colpus is able to run the full backups outside school hours or on weekends. "We considered several products but HPE VM Explorer was, by far, the best in terms of functionality and price," says Colpus.

Easy to learn and use
For Colpus, the most immediate benefit of HPE VM Explorer was the ease with which he could begin using it. He was particularly pleased to be able to download and test a free version of the software before committing to purchasing a full license.

"Setting up the first backup was a straightforward and simple process that took less than 30 minutes," he says. "Since then, we've been able to let the backups continue automatically—they very rarely need adjusting."

Speed and flexibility
The time for each backup depends on each individual server but, generally, Colpus can perform incremental backups within a few minutes and full backups in half a day.

Case study
Notre Dame School

Industry
Education

Customer at a glance

Hardware
• HPE ProLiant DL380 Servers

Primary software
• HPE VM Explorer

File restorations are also easy using HPE VM Explorer's Backup Explorer function. This allows Notre Dame to navigate past incremental backups to restore specific files from specific dates.

"Given that students are constantly adding media to the school network, the exact composition of each incremental backup changes significantly from day to day," Colpus says. "I find it very useful to be able to pluck individual files out of the archive when they're needed."

Compatibility with a range of applications and devices

When Notre Dame implemented HPE VM Explorer, it was using both Hyper-V and VMware to virtualize its servers. The fact that HPE VM Explorer could back up both server types with the same instance appealed greatly to Colpus, who wanted to find an all-in-one VM backup solution for his environment.

HPE VM Explorer has also integrated seamlessly with Notre Dame's other applications, backing up data from its School Student Information System, Microsoft SharePoint®, and Sage 200 accounting suite.

Colpus stresses that the efficiency of HPE VM Explorer has boosted staff productivity. "We don't have to worry about whether or not the program will reject data from one application or another," he says. "We can leave it to work in the background and focus our attention on other important tasks."

An affordable solution

Another attractive feature of HPE VM Explorer is its affordability.

"With HPE VM Explorer, we've found a simple and quick way to back up all of our servers—it's cost-effective and easy to use," Colpus says. "That's not to say that VM Explorer is merely a good product for its price—it's an excellent product for any price."

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