

Twynham School Relies on DocAve® to Protect Valuable SharePoint Data

CASE STUDY

Customer Profile

Twynham Comprehensive School is a premiere co-educational secondary school located in southwest England. As a certified Leading Edge institution with an esteemed faculty and a student body numbering 1500, Twynham perennially ranks in the top 10% of all English secondary schools. Founded in 1931, Twynham has established itself as one of the most technologically progressive educational facilities in the United Kingdom, with eight dedicated computer labs and an array of computer and software class offerings. As a partner in the Microsoft Learning Gateway Program, Twynham organizes an active online community of educational institutions and regularly advises other schools regarding technical platforms and strategies beneficial to educators.

The Challenge

In 2001, Twynham committed to creating a unified online-community and knowledge repository for its students, faculty, parents, and alumni. The goal was to create a “one-stop shop” where the school’s 6000-member community could collaborate, learn, and share information. Twynham’s IT administrators recognized SharePoint as the ideal platform and built a single-server farm. Bolstered by positive response from students and teachers alike, in 2007 administrators upgraded the environment to Microsoft Office SharePoint Server (MOSS) 2007.

Before long, SharePoint became an integral part of Twynham’s daily operations. Students regularly logged in throughout the day to review class schedules, track grades, submit coursework, and access media from the school’s extensive digital library. Parents frequently accessed the environment from home to learn of school activities and track their child’s progress. Teachers and school administrators utilized the platform to post lesson plans, distribute school notices, manage Human Resources, and - via the Microsoft Learning Gateway Program - collaborate with other schools to expand course offerings and foster information exchange.

With over 50GB stored directly in MOSS and over 1TB of media regularly delivered to end-users through the platform, robust data protection was imperative to successful management of the environment.

“DocAve is best-of breed.”

Dave Coleman - Network Administrator, Twynham School



Customer Location

Christchurch, England

Industry

Education

Platform

Microsoft Office SharePoint Server
2007

Critical Needs

A granular SharePoint backup and recovery solution that maintained all metadata, provided out-of-place restoration, and did not conflict with pre-existing network-wide protection routines

AvePoint Solution

DocAve Backup and Restore

Results

- Dramatically increased flexibility of SharePoint content movement and reorganizations
- Drastically reduced time and resources required for granular restores
- Conflict-free, hybrid enterprise-wide protection

Since its deployment of SharePoint in 2001, the school's IT administrators had relied on Symantec *Backup Exec* to protect SharePoint content, as it did to protect its enterprise-wide Windows platform. Symantec delivered adequate protection of the school's Windows and WSSv2 environments, but when Twynham upgraded to MOSS, administrators began running into significant problems.

"It [Symantec *Backup Exec*] just didn't work for MOSS," explained Dave Coleman, Senior Network Administrator at Twynham. "It seemed to backup fine, but it failed every time we tried to restore anything. We could restore to a local drive and then upload, but when you're dealing with gigs and gigs of data, that just wasn't practical."

Given the value of its SharePoint content and the significant resources required to perform full database recoveries just to restore a single item, Twynham realized it needed something better.

The AvePoint Solution

Twynham needed reliable, granular, and full-fidelity backup and recovery capabilities to protect the over 50GB of data and hundreds of sites stored on its MOSS environment. Importantly - given the significant investment the school had already made in Symantec products to protect its Windows platform - Twynham required a SharePoint data protection solution that could run concurrently and conflict-free with *Backup Exec*.

After investigating the products available on the market and talking to industry colleagues, Twynham decided to test DocAve because of its reputed reliability, its speed and granularity of recovery, its ease of use, and its minimal disruption to the existing IT environment. Twynham received a fully-enabled trial version of the software from AvePoint sales representatives in the United Kingdom, and - following a short evaluation period - deployed AvePoint's DocAve *Backup & Restore* module on its production environment.

Twynham scheduled DocAve to run nightly full backups of its MOSS content, written directly to the school's Networked Attached Storage (NAS). Leveraging DocAve's enterprise-strength compression and integrated data-pruning scheduler, Twynham maintained backup records on a 14-day rotating cycle.

DocAve integrated seamlessly with Twynham's pre-existing, enterprise-wide data protection routines. MOSS data backups were delivered by DocAve to the school's NAS, then conveyed to further tiered storage by *Backup Exec* in accordance with established backup schedules. Leveraging DocAve's

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unsurpassed SharePoint protection capabilities and Symantec's Windows platform protection, Twynham was able to create a robust and reliable data protection system.

It wasn't long before a crisis arose to test DocAve's reliability: One morning a school staff member accidentally deleted the access files for all of Twynham's video media. Administrators used DocAve to restore the mission-critical data in minutes. "We have over 3000 video files that are accessed constantly," said Coleman. "We needed to get the access files restored very quickly. Using DocAve, we had them all back in a flash. It was brilliant."

The Bottom Line

Using DocAve, Twynham School is able to protect critical SharePoint data with agility and confidence. No longer burdened with the need to perform full recoveries to restore a single item, Twynham has enjoyed significant performance improvements as system-resources once dedicated to data protection are re-tasked.

With conflict-free deployment of both DocAve *Backup & Restore* and Symantec *Backup Exec*, Twynham's IT administrators have delivered a cost-effective hybrid protection solution that ensures accelerated return on investment and lower total cost of ownership for MOSS.

Most importantly, DocAve has allowed Twynham to confidently store intellectual assets in its SharePoint environment, leveraging the platform's efficiencies for dramatic educational and productivity gains for its students and staff.

"The key thing is: It works," said Coleman. "We can backup easily, we can restore easily, and it integrates well with the other protection systems we had in place. In my opinion, DocAve is best-of-breed. Even if the other vendors improved their SharePoint products, we wouldn't change. We're too happy with DocAve."

As SharePoint usage has continued to accelerate throughout the school, IT administrators have recognized the need for an expanded farm architecture. Accordingly, Twynham is currently preparing to deploy a medium-size MOSS farm (2 front-end servers, 1 index server and 1 search server) in late 2008. Twynham anticipates utilizing DocAve's granular out-of-place restore function to populate the new environment with speed and precision.

"AvePoint will play a big part in our changeover. The out-of-place restore will be a key to our transition," concluded Coleman.

About AvePoint

Since 2001, AvePoint has been a global leader in enterprise-strength infrastructure management software solutions for all Microsoft SharePoint Products and Technologies. Propelled by one of the world's largest SharePoint-exclusive development teams outside of Microsoft, AvePoint's award-winning DocAve software delivers comprehensive and flexible infrastructure support for backup and recovery, replication, migration, administration, archiving and compliance solutions for Microsoft SharePoint.

AvePoint's globally recognized pioneering technology pilots the products of OEM partners such as NetApp and IBM. Headquartered in Jersey City, NJ, AvePoint serves over 3000 enterprise customers, including many Fortune-500 companies, across 6 continents, via offices in Jersey City, San Jose, Chicago, Washington D.C., USA; London, UK; Melbourne, Australia; and Changchun, Dalian, China. AvePoint is a Managed Gold Certified Microsoft Partner and GSA Certified Provider.

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