

Pflugerville Independent School District

Pflugerville ISD turns to SEP and Retain Unified Archiving for SAN and Server Migration, Disaster Recovery, and Information Archiving.



Overview

Pflugerville Independent School District, a fast-growing K-12 district in Texas, was faced with moving its operation from a legacy SAN and server hardware environment to a new SAN and Virtual Server installation.

Challenge

At the time, its existing backup system had become unreliable and inconsistent and was based on tape libraries. The tape libraries were out of warranty and started to require maintenance.

The amount of data to back up had grown to the point that during the backup window there was not sufficient time to complete all the

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Network Administrator
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backup jobs necessary. The system, although once “state of the art,” was now slow, cumbersome to use, and unreliable. Backed up emails were difficult, at best, to retrieve.

It was imperative that the district have a reliable backup system before it started transitioning to the new SAN and server environment. Pulling out the old tape library hardware was one of the first steps in that process in order to provide rack space for the new SAN and Server hardware. “We needed a backup system that would not require a great deal of physical hardware or space and would support our environment, which was Novell (now part of OpenText™) NetWare, Cluster Volumes, and eDirectory,” states John Carlton, Network Administrator.

Mr. Carlton also wanted a disaster recovery solution and reliable archiving that allowed users to retrieve their own old emails while meeting his compliance requirements and open records policies.

Solution

“After testing SEP sesam with the trial software they made available, we confirmed that it did in fact support NetWare Cluster Volumes and [NetIQ] eDirectory Rights,” Carlton said.



At a Glance

- **Industry**
Education
- **Location**
United States
- **Challenge**
The organization needed a reliable backup system before it started transitioning to the new SAN and server environment.
- **Products and Services**
Retain Unified Archiving
GroupWise Disaster Recovery
- **Success Highlights**
 - + Uses GroupWise Disaster Recovery to back up seven GroupWise post offices and agents each night
 - + Archives old emails while keeping them available to users
 - + Maintains smaller mailbox database files on the SAN with Retain Unified Archiving

“Because of Retain, we can maintain smaller mailbox database files on the SAN.”

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Network Administrator
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The team made the decision to purchase a piece of standard server hardware that could be reused or expanded down the road and SEP software to get started on the transition process of going from the old hardware to the new SAN and server environment.

The Pflugerville ISD Systems department installed the new SUSE Linux and built the server, which has 20 TB of onboard storage and occupies two rack units of space. SEP engineers worked with Pflugerville staff and remotely loaded the SEP software onto a server and implemented the desired configuration within a few hours. “After using SEP sesam for several months, we have to say that we are very pleased with the product’s expanded functionality, very pleased with the ease of use and in working with the company as a whole. In addition, SEP’s support staff has been a pleasure to work with throughout the installation and continues to be very responsive whenever we have questions!” stated Carlton.

“Thanks to the SEP sesam solution, we had reliable backups immediately, and now restoring our critical data is fast, easy, and accurate. It has allowed us to move ahead with the transition to the new SAN and server environment with confidence that we are protected as we move our data.”

To address its disaster recovery and archiving needs, Pflugerville turned to OpenText™ GroupWise Disaster Recovery and OpenText™ Retain Unified Archiving. Pflugerville uses GroupWise Disaster Recovery to back up seven OpenText™ GroupWise post offices

and agents each night, so at any time, the district will lose no less than one day’s worth of emails in the event of a system failure. The district stores faculty and staff emails for seven years and student emails for two.

The district also runs Retain Unified Archiving each night to archive old emails. Once emails are archived, they are stored much more efficiently, but they are still available to users. “The process of restoring mail from the archive in Retain Unified Archiving is much more efficient and easy. It is a reliable system that users are starting to trust and therefore not maintaining old mail in their mailboxes. Because of Retain Unified Archiving, we can maintain smaller mailbox database files on the SAN,” explains John Carlton. “Implementing SEP sesam has eased our workload and has provided additional backup capability and capacity we did not have with other solutions. In addition, the time we spend working on backup related issues has been dramatically reduced,” states John Carlton.

“Our backup window is now sufficient to handle all the backup jobs necessary to protect the data. We start close to 30 full backup jobs of over 5 TB of data every Friday at 5 p.m., all of which usually finish by Saturday evening. It fully supports Windows, Linux, and NetWare servers as well as Novell (now part of OpenText™) Cluster Volumes. Over the past year, we have become confident in the system and no longer monitor our backup process after-hours to insure that it is working. When we come in on Monday mornings, the process has routinely run smoothly and successfully.”

“We have already recommended SEP sesam to several of our colleagues in the area,” Carlton adds.

Results

With GroupWise Disaster Recovery and Retain Unified Archiving keeping GroupWise emails secure, the benefits have been significant. The Pflugerville ISD network administrators were able to replace their inefficient tape backup system and migrate to more cost-effective Linux servers. Not only that, but now they can pull email for public information requests quickly and easily. And best of all, service desk calls are way down, saving time and frustration for all of the 30,000 users on their system.

About SEP Software, Inc.

SEP Software, Inc., of Boulder, CO, provides industry leading backup and recovery software for Enterprise as well as Small to Medium sized businesses. SEP sesam is designed for multi-Operating Systems, multi-Database, multi-Groupware IT environments. SEP makes complex backup tasks easy. Introduced in 2000 the new SEP sesam has been installed at over 3,500 sites worldwide.

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