

Rochester Institute of Technology

Large educational institution automates and streamlines backup and recovery by moving to the cloud.



Overview

Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) serves more than 15,000 undergraduate students and offers one of the largest cooperative education programs in the world. The institute's College of Applied Science and Technology (CAST) cost-effectively and quickly protects data scattered across faculty staff members' computers. It has achieved this by using the cloud-based backup tool Micro Focus® Connected MX to automatically back up the data.

Challenge

Before 2009, data backups caused serious headaches for IT and faculty staff members at RIT's College of Applied Science and Technology (CAST).

One problem was that faculty staff members did not always back up data stored on their

personal computers to a separate location, such as a server. The institute provided space on its servers, but not enough to archive all emails and store large volumes of personal files. Some faculty staff members preferred storing files on their own computers, to prevent anyone else accessing their confidential information. However, faculty staff members lost important data if their hard drives failed.

When this occurred, the college's IT team could spend a whole day trying to recover critical files. In some cases, the team sent hard drives to a professional data recovery service, which cost up to \$2,000.

In 2009, the college's IT team fixed this problem by adopting the endpoint backup software Micro Focus Connected Backup. They installed the software on all staff members' computers, and it automatically backed up their data to cloud storage.

By 2016, the college wanted to be even more cost-efficient in backing up staff members' data.

The college's IT team began looking at other cloud-based backup solutions. "We were looking for a backup solution that provided flexibility and ease of administration," says Joel Yates, Manager of Technical Services, CAST.

"We're definitely saving time and money. We don't have to worry about hard drives failing, or paying for data restoration."

JOEL YATES

Manager of Technical Services
Rochester Institute of Technology



At a Glance

- **Industry**
Education
- **Location**
United States
- **Challenge**
To efficiently and cost-effectively back up the data held on faculty members' 130 computers.
- **Products and Services**
Connected MX
- **Results**
 - + Backed up data on faculty members' computers regularly and reliably
 - + Eliminated storage constraints after moving to cloud solution
 - + Enabled users to manage their own backup and recovery, saving IT team time
 - + Reduced backup costs by approximately 12%

Solution

The team considered Dropbox, but it required users to store files in a specific location on their computer. They also considered CrashPlan, but thought it was hard to administer. They also didn't like the limits it set on the size of backups.

The college evaluated Connected MX, which is the successor to Connected Backup. Like Connected Backup, Connected MX is installed on users' personal computers and automatically backs up data to the cloud or to a company's servers.

As a bonus, each faculty staff member could have the software installed on five computers at no extra cost. For example, a staff member could back up data stored on a desktop PC at the college, as well as data stored on a laptop and a home computer.

Connected MX includes file syncing and sharing features, making it easier for users to access their data whether they are at home, in the office or traveling.

The college was impressed with the Connected MX pilot and implementation process. The IT team piloted the software on 10 computers for two weeks, allowing time to evaluate its features. The team then had a two-month grace period to gradually deploy Connected MX, while keeping Connected Backup running on other computers.

"We really liked what we saw," says Yates. "It was great because there wasn't a period where a machine wasn't able to back up—we were able to get out of the old into the new."

The IT team used Microsoft's System Center Configuration Manager (SCCM) to deploy Connected MX on 130 computers. By the end of February 2017, the college had successfully replaced Connected Backup with Connected MX.

Results

Reduces Cost

Unlike Connected Backup, which is priced according to the number of devices, Connected MX licenses are based on the number of users. As a result, Yates estimates the college has cut the cost of backing up faculty staff members' data by 12 per cent.

The college doesn't pay extra if each faculty staff member uses Connected MX on up to five computers either. "We've also reduced our number of seats, because now users can have multiple devices under one account, instead of one account per device," says Yates. "A lot of users have more than one machine. Now, we don't have to pay extra."

Protects More Data

The college can use Connected MX to back up more of staff members' essential data, such as PST email archives, documents relating to research grants, and teaching curriculums. Connected MX also provides continuous data protection by backing up changes to users' data.

Because each staff member can use the software on up to five devices, they can protect more of their data. Since first deploying Connected MX, the college has increased the number of computers using the software to 200, and Yates expects this number to increase. "We knew our users had a number of devices and we knew they'd definitely want to take advantage of a service like that," says Yates.

Using Connected MX to back up data stored on staff members' laptops while they are working overseas is straightforward. "We have international campuses in Croatia and Dubai," says Yates. "Our backups will run over there as well, without needing to create a special firewall rule to allow access from wherever the member is traveling." The college has also avoided

buying additional storage hardware, because Connected MX backs up faculty staff members' data to the cloud environment.

Saves Time

Connected MX's interface makes it easier for faculty staff members to back up and recover data themselves, instead of relying on the IT team to do it. "Users have found the interface very straightforward to use," Yates says. Users can also choose which files and folders they want to back up, though the IT team can set rules to protect certain folders.

Giving users this ability saves time for the IT team. Without Connected MX, every time they needed to recover files for a user, they would probably have to extract files from a data snapshot located on a server and copy the files to a shared folder.

"Our users can easily restore files themselves, which lightens the IT department's load. Since we don't have to extract specific files from a full backup, it takes all the administration time away," says Yates.

While the initial backup can take several hours, subsequent backups and file restorations usually take only a few minutes. Connected MX only backs up changes to data, reducing the volume of data it sends to the cloud. Yates says network traffic hasn't slowed down faculty staff members' machines.

"We tell users that, other than an initial backup that can take several hours, it's only a few files that are updated after that, which greatly improves network speeds," says Yates.

Peace of Mind

Connected MX gives the college's IT team confidence that they can meet legal and industry requirements. For example, they can use Connected MX to store faculty staff members'

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emails for six years, in case they are needed later for legal purposes. The product also meets requirements for the college to retain industry credentials with the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology.

The college’s IT team also know that at any time they can generate reports showing the

status of backups, any devices that are not being backed up, and trends in data usage. This makes it easier for them to check that data is protected, even as faculty staff members continue storing it on an increasing number of computers.

“All the users have peace of mind,” says Yates.