

Hendrick Hudson School District

Customer Snapshot

Name

Hendrick Hudson
School District

Overview

K-12 | Public Education

Location

Montrose, New York

EVault Product

EVault® SaaS data protection service plus Agents for Microsoft Exchange and SQL Servers and Open File Manager

IT Environment

11 Microsoft Windows 2003 Servers running Microsoft Exchange 2003, SQL Server 2003, educational applications and file shares

Hendrick Hudson School District Uses EVault SaaS for Turnkey Backup and Remote Disaster Recovery

Overseeing the IT needs of five schools, including a host of administrators, teachers and over 2,500 students is the job of the Hendrick Hudson School District's Director of Technology Mathew Swerdloff. Ensuring the school district's data and applications remain up and running, no matter what happens, is one of Swerdloff's key responsibilities. But finding the right automated, online data protection proved more difficult than he expected. Only after implementing EVault SaaS data protection from EVault, a Seagate Company, was he able to realize all his goals.

Goals

A few years back, Swerdloff and his team had been dealing with many of the same issues of other organizations using tape-based backup processes. At the time, the school district's servers were spread across multiple locations. This required tapes to be shuttled between sites for safe-keeping. The first step to a solution was to consolidate servers into the district's primary headquarters location. Internal auditors looking at the school district's tape backup practices also encouraged Swerdloff to come up with a better way to secure backup data offsite for secure storage and assured recovery. Those recommendations fit well with Swerdloff's own reasoning at the time, since he was eager to replace his cumbersome tape backup with some form of automated online remote backup.

"The first online backup service we tried just didn't work as advertised...Since we switched to EVault SaaS data protection, it's been smooth sailing."

Mathew Swerdloff,
Hendrick Hudson School District

Case Study

Hendrick Hudson
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Goals

- Replace cumbersome, faulty tape-based backup process
- Establish an offsite DR location for faster recovery
- Better satisfy internal and state auditors regarding DR
- Improve online backups with a more reliable, automated system
- Reduce costs and the size of the backup footprint

Solutions

Implemented EVault SaaS data protection to automate backups, meet auditors' requirements.

Results

The school district is confident that its data is secure and accessible from any location, and assured of rapid recovery even in the event of a regional disruption.

After first trying, then discarding another online backup service provider, Swerdloff developed a much better idea about what he wanted—and didn't want—in the next backup service he tried. "This time, I knew more about what I was looking for," said Swerdloff. "I sent out an RFP to a number of vendors, which included the need to perform a full-blown deployment as a test on every server. I ultimately narrowed it down to three vendors based on price and demos. EVault [with EVault SaaS data protection] was what ultimately won out."

He was confident EVault could help him achieve the top goals he had in mind for this type of service:

- Offsite storage and assured disaster recovery
- Satisfy both internal and state auditors' data retention requirements
- Automate online backups with a turnkey, reliable service that required no "baby-sitting"
- Limit the amount of critical data needing to be routinely backed up

Challenges

The school district had two factors increasing its risk for protecting systems and data. Being located near a nuclear power plant, the school district needed a DR plan that included offsite storage. Likewise, its Montrose, NY location placed it right in the path of traffic if an event in Manhattan caused residents to flee. Both situations pointed to needing backups to be securely offsite and accessible from anywhere.

"Our auditors were pressing us to have a DR plan in an alternate location. The worst case scenario is the district is shut down and in that scenario we wanted data offsite," he said. Unlike some of the competing backup services Swerdloff investigated, EVault SaaS offered the ability to restore and manage the backups from anywhere with Web access. He also liked that he could delegate restore responsibility to another team member and maintain strict role-based authority.

Most of all, Swerdloff was happy EVault SaaS was a dramatic improvement over his prior online backup service, which was fraught with problems. "It just didn't work as advertised. We had a lot of problems getting our SQL Server and Exchange backups to work," he said. "I just couldn't trust it. I wanted something I could trust and not have to check up on it every day." Unfortunately, the other backup service had continued challenges with its support, odd suggested workarounds and an interface that—while easy to use—didn't appear to be quite robust enough to let Swerdloff and his team tweak the backups to fit the school district's needs.

Solutions

Since switching to EVault SaaS, he hasn't looked back. The school district now protects nearly a terabyte of data each night spread across 11 Windows servers. This includes everything from SQL applications, Microsoft Exchange and educational applications for teachers and students to even file shares. Swerdloff reports "smooth sailing" since making the move to EVault. He's also happy to know this area of his internal and state audits will now pass with flying colors. "During our second audit, they were just really happy that this was all covered, not only in addition to doing the online backups, but that we had a separate site with the server running our key applications," he said.

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Results

The “hand-holding” and monitoring that Swerdloff once had to perform before are things of the past. “There’s zero hassle factor,” he maintains. “It’s highly reliable and I now have a high degree of confidence that everything is backed up. Management is very easy. It also gave me the flexibility to really fine tune the jobs and get the setup exactly how I wanted it.” Now, Swerdloff and his team are accustomed to getting routine email notifications of backup job success. They’ve done multiple restores with ease, when needed. Swerdloff also gives high marks to EVault’s backup agents in use for SQL Server, Microsoft Exchange and open files.

Swerdloff reports saving a lot on the cost of backup storage space as well, thanks to a number of EVault features like deduplication, compression and the ability of the EVault SaaS DeltaPro technology to send only changed data blocks since the last backup. Swerdloff exploits EVault SaaS’s robust rule-filtering and exclusion capabilities as well. These practices allow Swerdloff to protect his near-terabyte of data and applications using only 270GB of EVault remote disk storage.

Overall, his experience with EVault couldn’t be better. “Without hesitation, I would recommend EVault. I have no regrets and have been really happy with the service,” he said, noting, “I have actually invited other districts to come and look at it as an example and see what we’re doing.”

Take the Next Step

To learn more about EVault storage solutions, call us at 1.877.901.DATA (3282), email us at concierge@evault.com, or visit us at www.evault.com.



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