

# Sutton Local Authority Helps Schools Manage Data Backup and Recovery



## Backup and recovery – whose job is it anyway?

Sutton LA is one of the UK's top five authorities in school performance and pupil attainment and prides itself on delivering a high standard of education across all schools and colleges in its remit.

Educational establishments are increasingly reliant on IT systems and digital data to drive day-to-day classroom activities and manage administration. As such, everything from lesson plans to student course work, as well as timetables and accounting spreadsheets are produced, maintained and stored in a digital environment. Schools and colleges in Sutton LA were backing up such data to a local tape drive on site, with bursars and secretaries – and, on occasions, even the teachers themselves – taking responsibility for the task. Daniel Gale, Network Manager for CYPLS at Sutton LA, explains: “Teachers and secretaries were often too busy to concentrate on backing up systems so they sometimes forgot to change the tapes or take them off site. This means that the quality of a backup could be compromised.”

“In addition to this, we were finding that the tapes were rarely checked for reliability. This meant that there was no guarantee that data could be recovered in the event of a disaster. And even if we could recover the data from the tape, we'd still have to spend hours reinstalling the server applications and reconfiguring the settings”

## Preventing disruption

Gale realised that the backup and recovery strategy used by the borough's schools and colleges exposed them to unnecessary risk. With one minor data recovery requirement occurring each week, there was potential for serious disruption.

“We came to a point where we realised it would be best to implement a centralised backup infrastructure so that schools were not held individually responsible for their disaster recovery strategies. We'd been using Acronis software for deployment of servers and workstations and found it to be reliable and easy to use. We therefore set up a test environment to assess the company's backup and recovery solution.”

### Organisation:

Sutton Local Authority

### Sector:

Public Sector / Children, Young People and Learning Services (CYPLS)

### Key Challenges:

- Prevent data loss across 44 schools and colleges
- Take responsibility for backups away from teachers and bursars
- Ensure that backups work when data needs to be recovered

### Environment:

- 44 school & college servers running Windows® 2003
- 6 core servers running Windows® 2003

### Solution:

- 51 licences of Acronis® True Image Echo™ Enterprise Server
- 51 licences of Acronis® Universal Restore™

### Business Benefits:

- Teachers can focus on key roles and responsibilities
- Backup policy is unified and automated across the 44 schools and colleges
- Reliable server backups created without interrupting operations

## Incremental backups, immediate benefits

Gale was so impressed with Acronis' software and its ability to capture and protect an entire operating system, including files and applications, that after thorough testing he invested in 51 Acronis backup and recovery licences along with the complementary Acronis® Universal Restore™. Gale now uses Acronis to carry out daily incremental backups on each school or college server and to back up the six core servers at the LA's offices. Each incremental backup takes around half an hour, which is 16 hours quicker than a full backup and, unlike competing disk imaging solutions, has no impact on server performance. This means the incremental back-ups can run during the day, without disturbing the daily routines of each school or college. The software also completes full automated backups each weekend, when a larger window is available. As a result, data is backed up more regularly, preventing any significant data loss. The disk images created after each backup are sent over a secure private network to the LA's central offices, where they are stored until required, instead of backing up to tape locally. This ensures all data is recoverable, even if a school or college cannot be accessed or suffers structural damage. In addition, Acronis' Universal Restore software allows recovered disk images to be installed onto any server – regardless of make or model. Recovery times are not, therefore, constrained by the need to source machines with similar specifications.

## Remote management for improved flexibility and efficiency

“Acronis' software ensures that the entire backup process is fully automated, and can be managed centrally by our IT team,” notes Gale. “As such, staff at our schools and colleges don't need to worry about business continuity – and can focus on their primary role of educating students.” Gale notes that since purchasing Acronis' software he and his team can deal proactively with potential back-up and recovery issues before they impact on schools or colleges. “Acronis' software generates detailed logs after each backup,” he explains. “This alerts us to potential problems with individual servers, which can be fixed, usually remotely, without anyone on site being any the wiser. This feature alone probably saves me and the team over an hour each day in administration.”

Gale concludes: “Acronis' software has proven itself in a challenging environment. We rely on the software to restore accidentally deleted data at least once a week, and it has never let us down. In addition, it was easy to install and has required no training or technical support. The schools and colleges are happy that they don't have to take responsibility for backing up their data and I'm happy because I'm confident that any lost data can be recovered quickly and efficiently.”

## About Sutton LEA

The purpose of Sutton's Children, Young People and Learning Services Group is:

- to promote school improvement and high pupil achievement amongst all groups of pupils.
- to ensure all children are safeguarded.
- to promote integrated working so that the needs of all vulnerable children and young people and the associated needs of their families are identified and addressed early and effectively.
- to ensure that Sutton children who are in need are able to achieve the same standard of well being, health, development and safety that a good parent would want for their own child.

## About Acronis®

Acronis is a global provider of storage management software that enables corporations and individuals to move, manage and maintain digital assets. Acronis sells innovative solutions for disaster recovery, server consolidation and virtualization migration, which allow users to maintain business continuity and reduce downtime in computing environments. Acronis software products are sold in more than 180 countries and are available in 13 languages. For additional information, please visit [www.acronis.com](http://www.acronis.com).

