

Implementing Azure Back Up Server for St George's Universtiy Hospital

Summary

St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (**St George's**) is one of the country's principle teaching hospitals. With nearly 8,500 dedicated staff serving over 1.3 million people across south London and is the largest Healthcare provider in South West London, with its main site located in Tooting.

St George's came to Venture 1 Consulting Limited (**Venture 1**) to help them improve the reliability and reduce the cost of backup of one of their critical systems, whilst making room for the backup of other newly adopted services.

St George's were faced with the problem that the Hospital was quickly running out of space on their legacy backup system. To resolve this problem, Venture 1 recommended a new **Microsoft Azure Backup Server**, which Venture 1 would help setup, test and handover to St George's.

The Client

Founded in 1733, St George's is one of the UK's largest teaching hospitals, with a capacity of just over 1,000 patient beds. Venture 1 has a long lasting relationship with the IT team at St George's, helping implement, develop and assist in many different projects over the last four years.

At the time of the implementation, St George's had been using over **170 Ultrium tapes** to back up one of the hospital's primary systems. This was becoming an expensive and inefficient solution, with tapes having to be replaced every day and taken to an offsite storage facility. Retrieving backups was an inconvenient and laborious task. St George's were keen to change their outdated system and felt that the long relationship they had with Venture 1 made them the perfect candidates to help implement a new solution.

The Requirements/ Challenge

St George's wanted a new solution that would be able to overcome the constraints presented by the legacy tape backup system. There were a few challenges to overcome to successfully complete the implementation and meet St George's requirements. The foremost requirement was ensuring that the data contained within the backup was secure at all times.

St George's had stated that that the backup server had to be implemented without affecting any of the hospitals other IT services, meaning that backups on the old system could still be completed and used during the implementation process of the new system. St George's were also keen for the new service to be reliable, simple to use and secure, compared to the existing system that the St George's IT team were having to deal with.

The Solution

Venture 1 worked with the IT team at St George's to be able to have a better understanding of the challenge. St George's current solution had many constraints due to lack of space, which included:

- The Trust was forced to reduce backup job retention to save space, which meant leaving backups in a state where retention was insufficient.
- New systems could not be added to the backup jobs due to lack of space.
- Backups were taking a long time to complete, with full backups only taking place over the weekend and running into Monday morning. The system had equally slow recovery times.
- Tape management required administrators to load and unload tapes that are then transported and stored off-site. This is not an efficient solution for a busy, 24/7 running hospital.

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To overcome these constraints as quickly as possible, Venture 1 implemented a new backup service with attached storage. This provides fast local backup and restore for the most recent backups. The new service was installed with Microsoft Windows and Azure Backup Server. This is application aware, allowing the integral backups of St George's environment to backup and restore reliably.

The Azure Backup Server also allows the uploading of backups to Azure cloud storage for offsite retention. The backup server now copies backup jobs to the Azure cloud, with these jobs being retained on a separate schedule and providing a long term and off-site data storage solution. Cloud storage replaces the role of tape in the new backup service, which removes the expense and effort of tape management and storage.

Many backup and restoration tests were performed at the end of the implementation to make sure the new system would work and meet St George's requirements. These were fully documented so that the Trust has a validated process to follow in the future.

The Benefits

- The new service is much more reliable with all jobs succeeding, meaning St George's now spend less time trying to fix backup issues or bugs
- The backup job duration is now minutes rather than hours, so jobs now occur much more quickly.
- Tapes no longer need to be moved off-site and stored, saving St George's money and time.
- Tapes can now be re-purposed or retired, as can the legacy system backup agents and licenses, providing further savings.

Technologies

- Windows Server 2012 R2
- Azure Backup Server
- Azure Recovery Vault

Project Components

- Service implementation
- Support and Guidance

Customer Quotes

"Installation and configuration was simple, quick and painless. The new system was quickly incorporated into business as usual. Instead of being unreliable, the backups now just work."

"The team are pleased that their tape bag is much lighter now."

"Venture 1 Consulting was thorough and managed the installation from start to finish for us. Venture 1 Consulting start work armed with a clear understanding of requirements and plan for the installation and clearly know what needs to be done for a successful project. Moreover, Venture 1 Consulting is happy to work as part of our team which makes the project happen without fuss and gives our team the best possible knowledge share."

"Venture 1 Consulting is always willing to help when we have questions or need assistance."

About Venture 1 Consulting

Venture 1 Consulting is an IT Services company specialising in Microsoft infrastructure technologies and believes in working with clients to help develop and execute plans to meet business expectations. From our London headquarters, we approach all projects in a formal, yet relaxed way. We aim to provide exactly what is required: nothing more and nothing less. We are keen to work with you and not just for you and maintain a high level of ongoing dialogue during the course of all our projects.

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