Viewing O365 and onsite data in one place brings major benefits

Single control centre saves top school time and money

Assign consistent protection policies

Old school, new tech

Founded by William of Wykeham in 1382, Winchester College is believed to be the oldest continuously running school in the country. Defined by its motto, Manners Makyth Man, the school is one of the most prestigious in the world, educating around 700 boys aged 13 to 18.

Improving the effectiveness of a complex IT infrastructure was a major priority for Lawrence Beech when he took over as IT director at Winchester College.

Having multiple solutions managing data in a variety of different ways was clearly neither cost-effective nor beneficial. Lawrence turned to a solution that enables him and his eight-strong IT team to discover, manage and protect their data wherever it is stored – all through a powerful web-based control centre.

He said: "We had been using all sorts of local solutions in-house and we managed different applications and data sets in different ways so it really was quite clumsy and very inefficient from an IT staff perspective.

"

In our environment, we have half our data currently on site and half clouded in our Office 365 and Azure environment. We bring that all together under the Redstor banner and web interface, so it is easy to manage the data in one place.

"That's one of the great benefits of Redstor. My infrastructure guys really find this makes their life a lot simpler. Redstor is no longer simply back-up, it's evolving as a product and we now use it more as a data management tool."

Lawrence Beech, IT Director

"I wanted one easy interface – to understand what's happening with the data, where it is and how we could recover that data ourselves very easily if and when we wanted to do it."
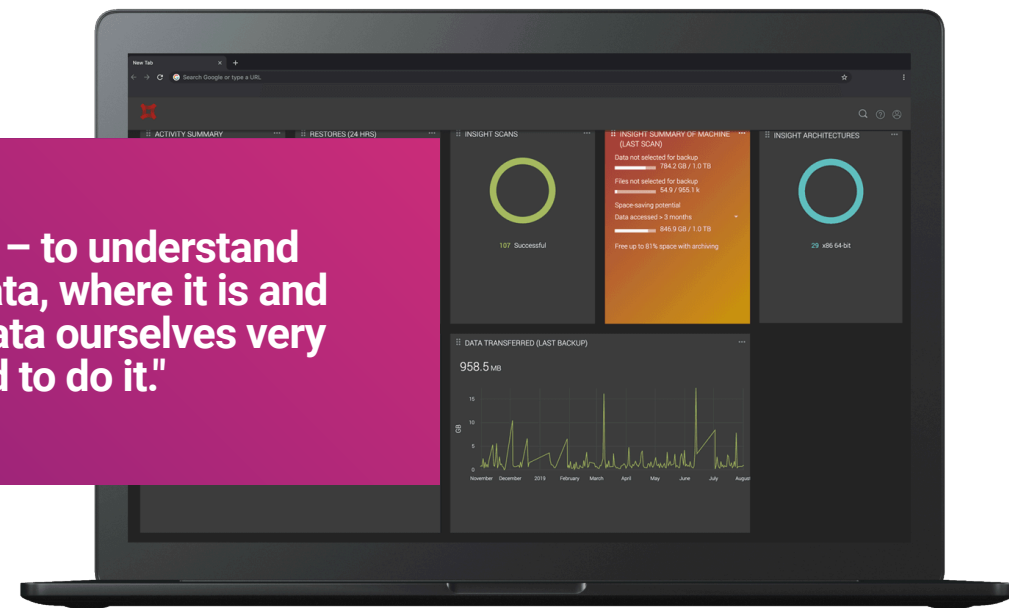
With borderless visibility of local and online data, the IT staff at Winchester College have the capability to assign consistent protection policies across the school's data estate, as well as simplify and automate data management with one central, easy-to-use system.

Lawrence has welcomed the benefits of intelligent, policy-driven automation, powerful monitoring and sophisticated reporting via a single control centre.

He said: "In terms of data protection it is easier management because we can apply policies to that data set and manage it all in one place very easily. It also gives me assurance from an audit perspective that we are very clear in our path and how we manage our data and our data map for the school."

Organisations are under pressure to address e-discovery requirements and comply with General Data Protection Regulation by searching and actioning all data wherever it resides.

Backups stored with Redstor can be searched to ensure every reference to a data subject, including in O365, is found without circumventing Microsoft security and auditing.

Separate backup strategy

Winchester College feel it is important to have a separate backup policy for O365 as a security standard.

There was no question of Lawrence assuming that data stored within O365 would automatically be protected against loss or accidental deletion.

Storing data with a single provider, even one of Microsoft's size, was a risk the college was not prepared to take.

Lawrence said: "I am the type of person that does not like to have all my eggs in one basket. Yes, I've got the data in O365 and it's highly available, but I also have the reassurance of Redstor protecting it too."

"I've now got a back-up copy of all the files - our email, our OneDrive - all in the Redstor system, and of course we can use that data with that one interface. That's the beauty of it."

Challenges

- Avoid having all of Winchester College's Office 365 data stored with a single provider
- Managing and protecting data efficiently whether it's onsite or in the cloud
- Finding a solution that is quick to deploy, secure and easy to manage
- The need to avoid splashing out on expensive new infrastructure
- Addressing increasing regulation and compliance issues

Solution

- Adopt a separate backup strategy for Office 365 data to retain full control
- Borderless visibility of entire, complex data estate at any time, on any device through a centralised management console
- Intelligent, secure, policy-driven automation and sophisticated reporting that can be set up within 15 minutes
- True cloud-to-cloud protection - with no need for capital expenditure
- A data management solution that delivers global search as well as reliable backup and recovery, archiving and disaster recovery

Key Benefits

- Instant access to Office 365 data in the event of accidental deletion or a ransomware attack
- A consistent data protection policy across whole estate, viewing cloud and onsite data in one place
- Quick and easy centralised management of data in Office 365 without circumventing O365 security and auditing
- Capability to auto-scale protection as demand changes
- Comply with General Data Protection Regulation by searching and actioning data wherever it resides

A challenging and diverse infrastructure

Winchester College has a challenging and diverse IT infrastucture that includes 10 miles of fibre, 25 miles of Cat6 cabling, 80 network switches and 565 Wi-Fi access points.

The IT team are responsible for 50 servers – 7 physical and 43 virtual – and provide support for 500 PCs as well as numerous other devices and technology.

Teaching staff are rapidly developing digital skills and setting more work live and online via One Note and Firefly for activities and study outside of the class environment, making task submission and marking more efficient.

In the last two years the amount of data that the college stores on site has trebled to 6TB, while 9TB of data per month is backed up to cloud storage.

Eliminating need for capital expenditure

Underpinning Winchester College's forward-thinking IT strategy is a desire to make full use of the cloud and avoid investing in more hardware.

Lawrence said: "One of my goals for the school is to actually reduce my local physical footprint.

"We have to recognise that what's key to us is delivering education to our young learners.

"We are not an IT organisation. We don't need to have a server room and manage a server farm and manage the data. We do have a hybrid environment, but we are moving more and more to cloud-based services so the ability to have reliable, high availability platforms that we can link to and use really suits the strategy that I am rolling out for the school."

What is your priority for protecting O365 data?

- Avoid having data stored with a single provider
- Managing on-prem and cloud data efficiently
- To avoid new infrastructure
- Addressing compliance issues

SEE RESULTS

Scales easily with transparent pricing

Redstor's pricing model is subscription-based, simple, cost effective and predictable. You only pay for what you use with transparent, fixed costs.

Lawrence said: "A key challenge I wanted to overcome was getting a rope around the cost and time taken to manage our data. With Redstor I know exactly how much it costs me per gigabyte.

"Our data storage has grown significantly and I can imagine it doubling in the next three-to-five years. I'd be very surprised if most organisations aren't seeing that kind of growth. The predictability of cost is very important in terms of budgeting and my finances."

What is the longest time users have been kept waiting before being able to start working again after a data loss or outage?

◯ Less than an hour

◯ 1-4 hours

◯ 5-12 hours

◯ 13-24 hours

◯ Two days

◯ I don't know

SEE RESULTS

Increased productivity

Traditional backups are not only costly, complicated and time-consuming, they cannot scale to support the explosion in new apps and growing data sets.

The obvious cost savings have been in terms of time and increased productivity.

"

Redstor is so simple to use and easy to read and manage. That makes planning easier because you have that self-reliance both to manage your own data, and for when you do your restores if you want to do testing or data recovery. You can do things within your own time frame to suit your own needs 24/7 with no disruption to your client community, so it scores very highly in making my team productive"

Lawrence Beech

Data streamed on demand

InstantData™, Redstor's unique, user-driven streaming technology, enables access to files within seconds.

Lawrence said: "We recently had an issue where we were upgrading a Management Information System.

"During the course of that upgrade we had some corruption to the database so we had to restore some file sets from that.

"With Redstor it was a very swift and very easy option.

"It was a simple drag-and-drop experience and it really worked.

"In the past, depending on where that data was stored and in which manner, that might have involved a different set of actions each time."
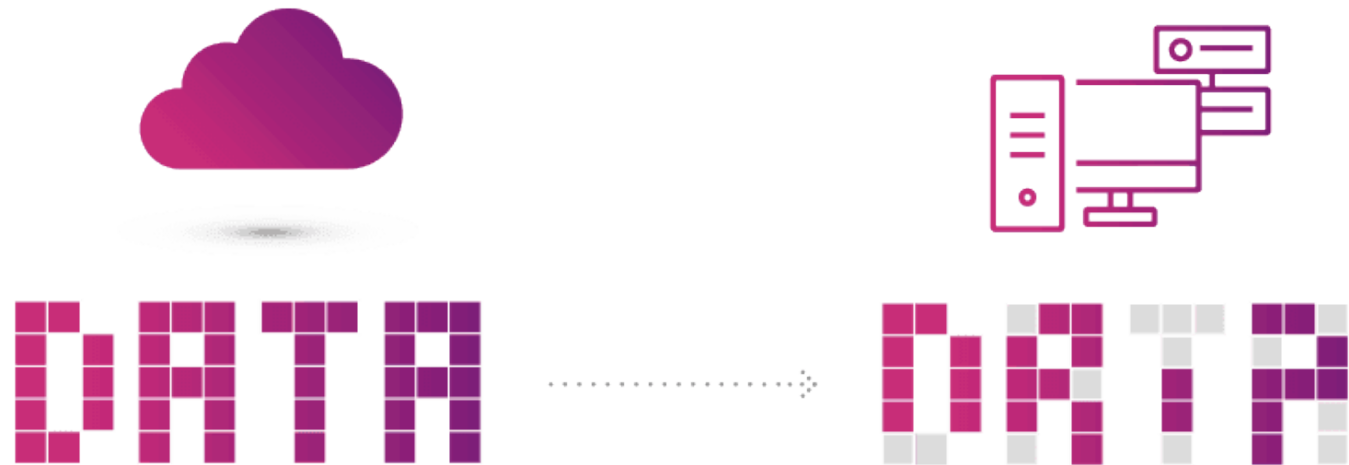
"Something that we can do now in a couple of hours would have taken the best part of a day previously."

Lawrence Beech, IT Director, Winchester College

Expert service, quick and easy to deploy

Deployed and configured in 15 minutes, Redstor took the pain and expense out of implementing a new data management solution.

Lawrence said: "I had used Redstor in a previous role and had no hesitation in strongly recommending it to the school.

"Within 24 hours we were fully operational. We performed our first upload of data and could access that data via the console very easily.

"We now back up and store about 10TB of our key management information and data with Redstor and also the One Drive data from O365 for the boys.

"If we have any issues or problems,

Redstor has a very pro-active support team. They are contactable 24/7 and I have every confidence in them.

"There's also a great little application that goes on your smartphone so you can manage the data very effectively from a mobile device as well.

"As an IT director it helps me sleep more easily at night, knowing where my data is and knowing that it is accessible and that we can restore it when we need it."

Thank you for reading

Winchester College Case Study