The University of St. Thomas Achieves High Performance and Migrates to AWS with Rubrik

UNIVERSITY of ST. THOMAS

INDUSTRY
- Education

RESULTS
- 90%+ management time savings
- 90%+ improved backup performance
- 40% data center footprint reduction

CHALLENGE
- Unreliable, labor-intensive legacy solution
- Undefined RTO/RPO due to slow recovery times
- Unable to archive to the cloud with legacy solution

SOLUTION
- Simple, all-in-one data management solution
- Lower RTO/RPOs with fast recovery
- Seamless cloud archival with AWS S3

Located in St. Paul, Minnesota, the University of St. Thomas has 10,000 full-time students and is the state's largest private non-profit university. The university offers more than 100 undergraduate majors and 60 graduate degree programs, including engineering, business, and law. The institution was ranked 115th in the "National Universities" category of "America's Best Colleges Survey" in US News & World Report.

Tim Sullivan, Cloud Architect, is part of a five person team that manages infrastructure operations and applications. "As an IT team, we're focused on enhancing the impact of academics through technology," said Sullivan. "We're always looking for ways to better protect the university's information systems."

MANAGEMENT COMPLEXITY AND PERFORMANCE ISSUES WITH LEGACY SOLUTION

Prior to Rubrik, Sullivan and team were not confident in their previous solution's ability to backup protect the university's data. Backups failed regularly, which meant the team had to spend substantial time troubleshooting.

"We were never confident that we could recover in a reasonable amount of time," said Sullivan. "Identifying the problem and initiating recovery could take up to six hours. With Rubrik's Google-like search, we can quickly find what we need, and recovery is almost instantaneous. Also, the incremental-forever backups let me rest easy knowing that we can restore to any point in time snapshot if we need to recover."

"In the past, our backups could run for more than 24 hours. With Rubrik, we can complete them in an hour," added Sullivan. "Our legacy solution could only backup half of our virtual machines, but with Rubrik, we can backup all of them. Now we can create realistic RTOs and RPOs with confidence that they can be achieved."

LEVERAGING AWS S3 FOR DATA ARCHIVAL TODAY AND DISASTER RECOVERY IN THE FUTURE

"Our aging infrastructure prompted us to move toward a more SaaS and cloud-oriented strategy. Unfortunately, our previous solution would not have allowed us to easily migrate to the cloud," said Sullivan. "Rubrik's cloud-first strategy was a perfect fit for us. It would also allow us to easily replicate to the University's AWS S3 cloud infrastructure instead of our secondary data center. Additionally, Rubrik was very reasonable from a cost perspective, especially with everything that was provided."

Integrating Rubrik with AWS S3 was a simple process, and the IT team was able to move the initial workloads to the cloud. Retention policies are now set for production environments, with data residing on the appliance for three days before archiving to AWS S3.

"Rubrik handles the syncing of backups and replication to AWS S3," said Sullivan. "With our backups in the cloud, we've been able to easily migrate them from one region to another. Features like deduplication keep our cloud footprint and associated costs to a minimum. In the future, we hope to have 90 percent of our services in the cloud, and Rubrik will be an integral part of that."

The University of St. Thomas is also evaluating cloud to enable a stronger disaster recovery plan. "With Rubrik's CloudOn feature, we can spin up cloud instances in AWS S3. The Rubrik node powers down automatically after conversion, keeping costs to a minimum. This will strengthen our disaster recovery strategy by allowing us to easily transition workloads between on-prem and cloud," said Sullivan.

SIGNIFICANT TIME SAVINGS WITH SIMPLE DATA MANAGEMENT

The University of St. Thomas has significantly improved their backup and recovery capabilities and are realizing their goal of moving older infrastructure to the cloud. The university is currently using Rubrik to protect their 90% virtualized environment, in addition to physical SQL, Windows and Linux. Additional benefits include:

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- **90%+ management time savings:** "With our legacy solution, weekly backup failures and lengthy recovery processes could take multiple hours per week. Now, we only need to spend an hour a month checking Rubrik. On top of that, we now have peace of mind knowing our data is secure and recoverable."

- **90%+ increased backup performance:** "Our backups used to take an entire day to run, but with Rubrik, it's down to an hour."

- **40% data center footprint reduction:** "With Rubrik, our data center footprint went from 340U to 200U. Having all of our backup technology in one appliance rather than scattered on multiple devices makes management easier and saves on physical space requirements."

- **Simple data management:** "It only took 15 minutes for the team to learn how to use Rubrik. Now, everyone feels comfortable running their own backups and recoveries, freeing up two team members who previously had to perform all restores."

- **Fast Microsoft SCCM recovery:** "Our Microsoft System Center Configuration Manager (SCCM) had never been tested from a recovery standpoint until we had a real problem with it. Rubrik enabled the immediate recovery of all packages and system functionality was quickly restored."