

## Oxford University Clinical School

### The Business

Oxford University Clinical School ([www.medicine.ox.ac.uk](http://www.medicine.ox.ac.uk)) is a division of the University of Oxford, the oldest English-speaking University in the world. It is the home of the Centre of Human Genetics and has played an important role in helping to identify the many thousands of genes that make up human DNA.

Oxford University Clinical School runs courses with an emphasis on the medical sciences that underpin medical training. Consequently, courses are suited to students with a strong interest in, and aptitude for biomedical science aiming to produce doctors who have a scientific approach and an ability to relate sympathetically to patients and their families or friends.

The School includes 15 research departments representing the various branches of medicine and provides training for 300 postgraduate medical students from around the World.

### The Challenge

Prompted by an immediate need for additional storage capacity, Oxford University Clinical School Information Management Services Unit (IMSU) realised that they were faced with a typical storage problem. "Numerous separate RAID 5 systems left us with excess redundancy and wasted storage. We were in the usual situation of having too much storage in the wrong place and too little where we needed it" comments Tim Shaw, Deputy Director, Networked Systems.

In order to achieve more efficient utilization of existing storage and maximise use of new storage a means of separating the storage from application servers was needed. This would enable a flexible approach to storage allocation, reduce management complexity and ensure that future expansion in storage and servers could be easily embraced with minimum administrative effort and disruption.

### The Solution

Following an assessment of solutions available from incumbent and prospective suppliers, IMSU selected SANsymphony™ as proposed by DataCore™ partner TriSys. Being totally independent from the underlying storage and application servers, SANsymphony provides the flexibility required to manage allocation of storage efficiently whilst achieving the desired separation of storage from servers. SANsymphony gives IMSU the freedom to choose future storage acquisitions from any vendor and is able to deliver support for the Novel Netware 6 application servers that underpin the email and file services.

Through deployment of SANsymphony, Oxford University Clinical School is expecting to realise significant savings in storage costs through centralised management capabilities and increased efficiency of storage utilization. The ability to respond to changing storage requirements without downtime will increase productivity as will the longer term goal of implementing LAN and server free backup through integration with SANsymphony.

### Oxford University Clinical School at a glance

**Business** - Higher Education and Medical Research.

**Main Requirements** - Higher utilization of storage, efficient and centralised management. Backup integration.

**Environment** - LINUX, Windows 2000 and Netware 6 running Novell GroupWise, Apache, MySQL, file and print services. XioTech storage. Brocade switch.

**DataCore Solution** - SANsymphony Network Edition providing centralised storage management.

## An Interview with Oxford University Clinical School

### How did you learn about DataCore?

A colleague had looked at an earlier implementation of SANsymphony when investigating SAN products a year or two ago so I was aware of its existence. I had also carried out a fairly thorough search on the web of SAN products.

### What problems were you aiming to solve with the chosen solution?

We wanted to implement separation of storage from application servers so that we utilized storage more effectively. A longer term goal was to provide a) LAN free backup and b) ultimately serverless backup.

### Which other solutions were considered?

We looked at FalconStor and StorAge, both of which were promising solutions but did not quite match our requirements. We were interested in the Dell/EMC connection as we have used DELL file servers for many years. We also considered expanding our existing investment in the XioTech Magnitude system.

### How long was the selection process?

We took around 4 months to decide on a solution although procurement took some time after that.

### Why did you choose a DataCore solution?

We liked the total flexibility offered by DataCore in respect of the hardware we wanted to use. Essentially it works with just about any configuration allowing us to mix and match various products to build our own SAN to our own requirements. Licensing was straightforward and we liked the fact that it is un-intrusive with regard to the application server.

### What is your hardware environment?

DELL PowerEdge 2550 SDS server with 2 X 1.13GB Processors and 2GB RAM. Serves 4 DELL application servers – 2550 and 1550 running LINUX, Windows 2000 and Netware 6. XioTech Magnitude storage. Brocade fibre channel switch.

### What applications are running on the servers using SANsymphony storage?

Novell Netware for file and print services, Novell GroupWise for email, Apache web servers and MySQL database servers.

### How much storage are you planning to manage with SANsymphony?

Initially we are using 500GB expanding to 1TB in the near future and probably growing by a Terabyte every 12-18 months.

### Can you estimate the value of using SANsymphony?

It is very clearly enabling us to manage storage more effectively and in the longer term will save time when introducing replacement file servers. We look forward to dynamically increasing storage space without time-consuming re-location of data.

### Can you estimate the cost savings provided by SANsymphony?

Not in monetary terms as yet. I do not foresee any net savings in the short term because of the relatively high cost of entry into the SAN arena. However, as the storage expands in the next year or two I would expect to reap significant savings as a result of our investment in SANsymphony.