SEPATON®
Intelligent Data Protection

CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

US Oncology Gets Speedy Recovery with SEPATON S2100-ES2 Virtual Tape Library

More than 7000 medical and administrative professionals at US Oncology need fast, reliable access to their patients' records and test results. When their physical tape systems could not provide the backup or restore performance they needed, US Oncology implemented a SEPATON S2100®-ES2 virtual tape library (VTL) with healthy results.

US ONCOLOGY OVERVIEW

Based in Houston, US Oncology supports the nation's leading health care services network dedicated exclusively to cancer treatment and research.

BACKUP APPLICATION

IBM Tivoli Storage Manager

KEY BENEFITS

- Cut backup times from 17 hours to less than 3 hours
- Enabled scaling of performance and capacity as needed
- Increased reliability of backups to nearly 100 percent

US Oncology
Advancing Cancer Care in America

"Before we had the SEPATON platform, restoring data was an awful experience. The SEPATON VTL makes restoring data nearly immediate and relieves our IT staff of time-consuming media management tasks, freeing their time for more productive assignments."

Scott Booth
Data Center Manager
US Oncology

Oncology supports a network of more than 1000 physicians that specialize in cancer treatment and research. Based in Houston, US Oncology has 440 facilities in 39 states and its member physicians treat more than half a million cancer patients each year.

US Oncology's IT department runs a combination of 650 HP rack-mounted servers and 300 blade servers running virtual server environments. Together, these servers provide functionality and data that is essential to both patient care and business operations.

THE ENVIRONMENT

To protect the data and applications on these servers, US Oncology's IT staff performed nightly incremental and weekly full backups using IBM LTO tape drives and IBM Tivoli® Storage Manager (TSM) software.

"For us, data protection is more than a sound business practice," said Scott Booth, data center manager for US Oncology. "If we can't give a doctor immediate access to an X-ray or a medical file, we may be jeopardizing the quality of someone's health care."

THE NEEDS

With more than 3 TB of data to backup daily, running their tape system was growing more complex. As a result, meeting backup window limitations and service level agreements (SLAs) was becoming increasingly difficult. "Our LTO tape library had grown out of control with four racks, 2500 tape slots and 24 tape drives. Despite this, we still needed more capacity and performance," explained Booth. "We had two choices—either move to disk or buy a second tape library."

Nightly incremental backups were running from 5:00 PM until 10:00 AM – the backup window had all but closed. Over the next few years, they would have to purchase more than 10 tape libraries to keep up with data growth. "We knew we needed a VTL to correct our data protection issues," said Booth.

The IT team's top considerations for a new system included performance and scalability gains for both backup and

CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

restore processes. They also wanted a solution that would let them add remote replication when their planned disaster recovery site opened in the near future.

THE SOLUTION

US Oncology evaluated VTL solutions from several vendors and quickly chose a SEPATON S2100-ES2 with 100 TB of capacity.

"SEPATON bested the competition on performance and scalability, hands-down," said Booth. "During the testing phase, we brought the S2100-ES2 online conservatively. Our backup administrator and I watched the console and eagerly waited to see the first backup take place. We saw nothing, yet the backup appeared to have completely perfectly. The backup was so fast that we couldn't see it. We increased the size of the data set dramatically and sure enough, it was now briefly visible – but still very fast!"

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THE RESULTS

The scalability of the SEPATON S2100-ES2 enables US Oncology to add capacity much more simply and cost-effectively than with their tape library. The S2100-ES2 not only cut US Oncology's backup times from approximately 17 hours to less than three hours but also dramatically improved their backup reliability.

The system also makes restoring data nearly instantaneous. "Before we had the SEPATON platform, restoring data was an awful experience," recalls Booth. "Retrieving even a couple of files from different points in time meant manually mounting and searching through the ten tapes we used for full backups and then restoring each of them individually. With SEPATON, we simply go to the appropriate point in time. The system makes restoring data nearly immediate and relieves our IT staff of time-consuming media management tasks, freeing their time for more productive assignments."

THE FUTURE

In addition to their plans to add SEPATON remote replication software, Booth is also looking forward to leveraging SEPATON's DeltaStor® data deduplication software to reduce capacity requirements and extend his cost-per-gigabyte investment even further.