



Save

Success Story

PHYSICIANS ACCOUNTING

Accounting Firm Adds Overland Tiered Storage Solution to Achieve Fail-Safe Data Protection and HIPAA Compliance

Challenges

- Existing DVD-based backup and recovery procedure was outdated and unreliable
- Increasing growth of medical billing information and adherence to stringent HIPAA requirements demanded failsafe data protection
- Multiple points of data recovery required tiered-storage solution that was affordable and maximized use of existing resources

The Solution

REO™ 1000, NEO™ 2000,
ULTAMUS™ PRO 500

Benefits

- Tiered storage delivers instant access to critical data, fast backups and restores of near-term data
- ULTAMUS PRO 500 yields three-fold increase in storage performance while REO disk-based backups are four times faster
- Streamlined management on the three-tier solution has lowered administrative overhead by 40 percent

Physicians Accounting Ltd. provides professional accounting and medical billing services to hundreds of anesthesia providers in private practice as well as physician groups. Founded in 1974, the Milwaukee-based company has developed a reputation for delivering top-notch medical accounting services while complying with rigorous health-care-industry regulations.

As a result, Physicians Accounting's data storage requirements have grown along with its burgeoning client base. According to Roy Mowbray, systems administrator for Physicians Accounting, safeguarding clients' sensitive medical information while ensuring uninterrupted access to pertinent accounting data are top priorities. "Our first order of business is to provide the highest levels of privacy, security, availability and integrity for all business-critical accounting data," he says.

"Overland covers everything we need in backup and recovery with a robust tiered storage solution that is within reach of any mid-sized company. I'm sold on the solution because it's fail-safe and gives us a competitive edge."

Roy Mowbray
Systems Administrator, Physicians Accounting

The Challenge

In adhering to his strict "save and save often" data protection philosophy, Mowbray backs up crucial accounting files several times each day as well as retains multiple copies of archived data to accommodate frequent requests for historical billing information. "We have a

constant need to retrieve bills on behalf of our clients, their patients and respective insurers," explains Mowbray. "As part of our service-oriented approach, we need to produce the required information quickly so billing issues can be resolved efficiently."

In addition to providing expedited access to current and historical data, Physicians Accounting conforms to strict security and data retention policies. For example, extreme caution is taken to safeguard up to seven years of accounting records as required by HIPAA regulations. For years, Mowbray relied on a DVD jukebox storage retrieval system but as the company's client roster grew, managing increasing amounts of data in this fashion became too slow and cumbersome. Additionally, a planned migration from Peachtree Software to Microsoft's Dynamic GP (formerly known as Great Plains) software created greater opportunities and new challenges.

"We were eager to reap the benefits of tighter integration across all our Microsoft applications," notes Mowbray. "Yet, we also knew that moving to a SQL-based platform intensified our backup and recovery requirements." As other members of the company's nine-person IT department laid the framework for transitioning its core accounting platform, Mowbray focused on improving information resiliency through a tiered-storage approach.

The Solution

The decision to implement an information lifecycle management (ILM) strategy was driven by the continuing demand to store data in multiple places, depending on availability,

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recoverability and compliance requirements. To that end, Physicians Accounting first deployed a Storage Area Network (SAN) to consolidate critical file servers, applications and client data. Next, the company sought a faster, more reliable yet economical approach to managing all its data. "We needed instant access to our most crucial accounting files, expedited recovery of near-term data and more effective management of archived information," explains Mowbray.

During 2005, Physicians Accounting embarked on an investigation of tiered-storage solutions, starting with cutting-edge primary storage platforms. Additionally, the team reviewed disk-based backup and recovery appliances for reducing the company's backup window while accelerating data restores. Finally, a tape automation solution was evaluated as a highly affordable solution for long-term data archival.

In assessing solutions, Physicians Accounting hoped to find one solution provider with a suite of complementary, tiered-storage solutions instead of being forced to buy separate products from different vendors. "We wanted to leverage an end-to-end storage protection solution, similarly to how we rely on Microsoft for our application software needs," explains Mowbray. "Fortunately, we discovered Overland Storage had affordable yet powerful tiered storage solutions within our reach."

Designed for small- and medium-sized businesses, Overland's ULTAMUS™ PRO primary storage, REO SERIES® disk-based backup appliance and NEO SERIES® tape library work together seamlessly to store data where it makes the most sense. According to Mowbray, seeing a live demonstration of the ULTAMUS PRO's snapshot and replication features clinched the deal.

"Performing point-in-time recoveries was completely intuitive and it was simple to restore data within minutes of a data loss or corruption," he adds. "Moreover, ULTAMUS PRO complemented REO and NEO to give us unsurpassed levels of data protection."

The Benefits

Physicians Accounting leverages Overland's ULTAMUS PRO 500 with embedded Protection OS software intelligence and advanced features, including unlimited and near-instantaneous snapshots as well as local and remote replication of the company's SQL Server, Microsoft Exchange and other vital business applications.

Frequent snapshots are taken throughout the day of the company's data, which then is replicated to a redundant server each night. Disk-based backups then are performed on a REO 1000 and offloaded to a NEO 2000 tape library for long-term retention.

With ULTAMUS PRO 500, Physicians Accounting has realized a three-fold increase in storage read/write performance while achieving both its Recovery Point Objectives (RPOs) and Recovery Time Objectives (RTOs) for applications requiring nearly continuous data availability and near-instantaneous recovery from data loss or corruption. Additionally, Mowbray uses the REO's built-in virtual tape library (VTL) capability to further expedite disk-based backups and restores, which now are four times faster.

According to Mowbray, having the NEO provides an extra measure of security. "I can put in a couple of tapes and just let it go," he says. "This eliminates many of the small tasks because our previous solution required constant supervision to

insure reliable backups." Mowbray estimates that administrative overhead has been lowered by more than 40 percent. "With Overland, we now have multiple points of recovery to achieve the perfect balance between protection, performance and total cost of ownership," he adds. In the future, a second ULTAMUS PRO will be installed at the firm's disaster recovery site to support remote data replication for complete business continuity.

"To truly save and save often, you must have a tiered storage strategy in place," concludes Mowbray. "To find a single, trusted source with solid products and stellar technical support was huge for me. Overland covers everything we need in backup and recovery with a robust tiered storage solution that is within reach of any mid-sized company. I'm sold on the solution because it's failsafe and gives us a competitive edge."

About Overland Storage

Now in its 25th year, Overland Storage is a market leader and innovative provider of simply protected storage solutions – smart data protection appliances and software modules designed to work together, affordably, to ensure that information is automatically safe, readily available and always there. Overland's award-winning data protection solutions include the ULTAMUS SERIES™ of protected primary storage appliances; the REO SERIES™ of disk-based backup and recovery appliances; and the NEO SERIES® of tape libraries. Overland sells its products through leading OEMs, commercial distributors, storage integrators and value-added resellers. For more information, visit Overland's web site at www.overlandstorage.com.



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