



OXFORD UNIVERSITY: THE INSTITUTE OF MOLECULAR MEDICINE

SUCCESS STORY

World-renowned research institute relies on PowerLoader™ to store and protect life-saving data

BACKGROUND

The Institute of Molecular Medicine was founded in 1989 to offer an ideal environment for research and training of scientists and as such, its building has been equipped with the specific equipment and resources that are not commonly available within university laboratories

Situated on-site at The John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford, England, the Institute's role is to carry out essential research into human molecular biology, chiefly to determine the causes of genetic diseases and to understand how to control them. Major successes to date include breakthroughs in understanding the component structure and function of diseases such as diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, the AIDS virus and cystic fibrosis.

CHALLENGE

Because of its composition, The Institute of Molecular Medicine is dubbed a 'research hotel,' with different research groups operating under one roof to carry out a mix of short term and ongoing projects, each linked with a larger parent research unit within Oxford University itself. These groups, which comprise around 400 scientific and technical staff, are independent in operation but rely on a small administra-

tion for their management as well as a common Local Area Network (LAN).

Disaster recovery was another key factor for the Institute when defining its requirements for a storage system. A break-in a few years earlier resulted in a great deal of information residing on the stolen hardware being irrecoverably lost. Only the information saved on the central servers was recovered. The Institute is determined that this should never happen again.

SOLUTION

The selection process was somewhat simple in comparison to that of a profit-making organisation in that ROI was not an issue. "The number one priority for us was price," explained Tom Anstey, IT manager for The Institute of Molecular Medicine. "If the price wasn't right we wouldn't even have been in a position to evaluate, therefore we simply fished around for the best deal we could possibly get and that turned out to be from NCE Storage Solutions, who recommended the Overland system. Once the budget had been laid down and the PowerLoader™ AIT had been suggested to us as a good fit for our specific requirements, all that remained was for us to begin testing to see if it was true."

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- Tom Anstey
IT Manager



The AIT-2 library system was placed at the heart of the Institute's new storage infrastructure. At first it was run in parallel with the Institute's manual tape system, in order to accurately assess functionality. Both systems were configured to operate with Veritas Backup Exec software as the front-end within a Novell NetWare server environment. Following a two-week trial period, the DLT drivers were removed from Backup Exec and the Institute completed a seamless transition to the new AIT-2 system.

AIT in particular was chosen above other high capacity media primarily for redundancy reasons. The Institute is part of a larger medical group that was already using AIT-2 systems therefore it made sense to unify. The rationale was that in the event of a system failure, the tapes would easily transfer to another AIT system within an affiliated body in order to avoid sacrificing either time or information.

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Since its deployment Tom Anstey has noticed a number of benefits; In contrast with the old system that required daily checks, the automated PowerLoader AIT requires a minimum level of maintenance, amounting to changing the tapes once a month. Coupled with the simple menus featured on the front of the library itself, these benefits have substantially reduced the need for in house IT expertise.

The Institute was also impressed with services such as Overland's XchangeNOW™ direct replacement warranty program, which commits to providing replacement components or units, free of charge, within 48 hours of a failure.

For the immediate future, The Institute of Molecular Science plans to continue its expansion programme, adding more modules as needed. Over the next 12 months, there are plans to accomplish LAN-free backup through the recently installed Storage Area Network.

RESULTS

"The modular design of the PowerLoader AIT gives us total flexibility and the ability to grow our storage capacity as and when we need to," said Anstey. "We started off with a single unit and have now reached the stage where we need a second unit.

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