

CASE STUDY



Customer Location

London, England

Industry

Education

Platform

Microsoft Office 365

Microsoft SharePoint Online

Critical Needs

- Granular, point-in-time restore of SharePoint Online content
- Flexible backup schedule
- Reduce burden of managing SharePoint

Solution

DocAve Online

“As we onboard 6,000 students to the cloud, we are confident that we can retrieve SharePoint Online content for them quickly and without losing any data thanks to DocAve Online.”

**- Martin Whiteside,
Assistant Director of
Information Systems,
SOAS, University of London**

School of Oriental and African Studies Saves Time Protecting Microsoft® Office 365 – SharePoint Online Data for 7,000 Users with DocAve® Online

SUCCESS HIGHLIGHTS

- Granularly restored SharePoint Online content in minutes, saving time that IT could spend optimizing the platform for 1,000 staff members and onboarding 6,000 students
- Scheduled automated full and incremental backups to on-premises storage, giving IT increased control over backups at a low cost
- Implemented Software-as-a-Service solution that requires no installation or maintenance

CUSTOMER PROFILE

The School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London is the only higher education institution in Europe specializing in the study of Asia, Africa, and the Near and Middle East.

THE CHALLENGE

SOAS, University of London operates in a unique space, offering the largest concentration of staff in Europe concerned with Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. To provide staff with a solution that makes file storage and document collaboration easier— which ultimately allows them to be more productive – the school adopted SharePoint. However, managing an on-premises SharePoint environment became a burden for its IT team – 30 employees tasked with managing IT services to support 1,000 staff members.

While the platform offered the organisation benefits such as document sharing and business process automation through workflows, IT still experienced some challenges. “We didn’t have enough resources to run an on-premises deployment,” said Martin Whiteside, Assistant Director of Information Systems at SOAS. “With an environment as large as ours, we had difficulty maintaining SharePoint performance.”

To help ease this burden, SOAS decided to move to Microsoft Office 365 and use the Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) version of the platform, SharePoint Online. “With Microsoft managing infrastructure and maintenance, our IT team has significantly more time to spend on other projects,” Whiteside said. “We can work on getting 6,000 students on the platform in addition to our 1,000 staff members already on Office 365. We don’t have to worry about separate portals because this will support our user base.”

Although Office 365 addresses the organisation's SharePoint management and performance concerns, IT still saw limitations with native SharePoint backup capabilities. Microsoft conducts backups every 12 hours and only restores content at the site collection level. "We have retrieved more items from the Recycle Bin than anything else," Whiteside said. "However, we're used to having more flexible backup options. Deleted items only stay in the Recycle Bin for 30 days. That wasn't an acceptable solution for us."

THE AVEPOINT SOLUTION

To more effectively manage Office 365 backups, SOAS chose DocAve Online, a fully Azure-hosted SaaS offering for Office 365 management and protection that is part of AvePoint Online Services. "Before we implemented DocAve Online, we were worried about how to back up Office 365 and SharePoint Online," Whiteside said. "With DocAve Online, we have much more control over SharePoint Online backup than before."

Because DocAve Online offers SOAS capabilities that extend beyond what Microsoft offers natively, IT is able to protect its cloud content with a backup strategy that works best for its team. "Our main intranet, training information, software downloads for students, and IT collaboration site collection all live on SharePoint Online," Whiteside said. "We wanted to be able to control how we back up that data to ensure the best use of IT resources. With DocAve Online, we are able to schedule full backups once a week, and incremental backups daily. This frees up time for our staff to work on other things that need our attention."

DocAve Online also offers SOAS flexibility in how it stores backups. No longer relying on the Recycle Bin, SOAS keeps backup data on an on-premises file transfer protocol (FTP) server. "We considered other options, but they were ultimately more expensive," Whiteside said. "We were worried about paying more for a solution that would require us to back up to the cloud and then have to pay for more storage. It's quicker and easier for us to manage our backups on premises. With DocAve Online, we're not limited to a single backup storage method."

Additionally, SOAS is able to restore SharePoint Online content at the item level, something the platform does not do out of the box. DocAve Online is especially helpful in reducing the time IT spends performing data recovery. "Instead of restoring

an entire site collection, we can choose to recover a single item," Whiteside said. "If someone accidentally deletes a document, we can easily locate the backup and restore it in minutes."

DocAve Online provides SOAS with increased SharePoint Online backup and restore capabilities, which allows IT to spend less time restoring items from the Recycle Bin and more time optimizing its SharePoint Online environment. "As a SaaS solution, DocAve Online has helped us minimize the maintenance and management responsibilities for our staff," Whiteside said. "Choosing a service instead of adding staff members to manage Office 365 in house has saved us both time and costs. We've made a significant investment in Office 365, and we want to be able to support our entire user base as they adopt the cloud."

THE BOTTOM LINE

DocAve Online's granular backup and restore capabilities help the SOAS IT team address its Office 365 protection needs. "If a user mistakenly deletes a document or overwrites data, DocAve Online lets us granularly select those items and restore them from any recovery point," Whiteside said. "As we onboard 6,000 students to the cloud, we are confident that we can retrieve SharePoint Online content for them quickly and without losing any data thanks to DocAve Online."

ABOUT AVEPOINT

AvePoint is the Microsoft Cloud expert. Over 15,000 companies and 3 million cloud users worldwide trust AvePoint to migrate, manage, and protect their Office 365 and SharePoint data. Founded in 2001 and headquartered in Jersey City, NJ, AvePoint is privately held and backed by Goldman Sachs.

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