

## CASE STUDY

# Brown University Embraces Hybrid Cloud Environment and Selects Cohesity for Data Protection with Native Azure Integration

## Introduction

Founded in 1764, Brown University is the seventh-oldest college in the United States. The Ivy League institution is located in Providence, Rhode Island and is a leading research university offering undergraduate and graduate instruction to more than 9,000 students and 700 faculty members. Brown offers a broad range of courses of study, including 81 undergraduate academic concentrations, 51 doctoral programs and 32 master's programs.

## Challenges

Chris Menard, Lead Storage Administrator, directs a team responsible for infrastructure, storage, backup and recovery, storage services, and disaster recovery. His team was experiencing challenges with the existing legacy solution, and nightly backups were often not completed. With existing infrastructure from Data Domain, Networker and VMware, there were a lot of moving parts to ensure a backup completed. Upgrades were extremely painful and the time and effort required by the team for troubleshooting was becoming tedious and cumbersome.

Brown University manages more than 4P of data, with expansion at upwards of 20TB per week. The exponential growth of data makes it hard to keep up with storage demands. Faced with the existing Data Domain hardware coming up on a maintenance cycle and due for a refresh, Chris and his team decided to take a holistic look at the environment and put a modern solution in place that was designed to leverage virtualization capabilities and newer platforms.

Brown University mandated the following requirements in a secondary data solution:

- Ability to make secondary copies of data to the cloud
- Protection for disaster recovery, including snapshots in case of accidental loss
- Seamless integration with Microsoft Azure for flexible hybrid solution
- Reduce headaches with backups and upgrades to free up IT staff for other projects



## INDUSTRY

Higher Education

## USE CASE

Backup Suite, Backup and Recovery

## SOLUTION PARTNERS

Microsoft Azure, VMware

*"Cohesity's native integration with Azure could not be matched, and gave us tremendous flexibility for how to manage our secondary data without maintaining a separate piece of hardware. Cohesity Cloud Edition will provide the ability to recover snapshots seamlessly, fully recover VMs directly into Azure, and give us flexibility for using secondary offsite copies with Azure and Cohesity Cloud Edition. Cohesity has greatly simplified the entire process of managing and consolidating secondary data in a hybrid cloud environment."*

## CHRIS MENARD,

Lead Storage Administrator,  
Brown University

## Solution

Brown did its homework to identify the optimal solution for its requirements. After consulting Gartner research and looking at solutions from Cohesity, Rubrik and Veeam, the IT team began a comprehensive proof-of-concept (POC) between Cohesity and Rubrik. A key reason Brown went with Cohesity was overall ease-of-use and management, and the ability to connect seamlessly with Azure for enabling disaster recovery with secondary copies of data in the cloud. The evaluation process also included teams from Brown's Systems Group, responsible for VMware, Windows and UNIX systems, to test recovery across all systems.

Brown deployed Cohesity C2500 hyperconverged nodes with Cohesity DataPlatform Cloud Edition. The Cohesity solution handles all backup and recovery for central IT systems, including physical and virtual machines. Cohesity's seamless native integration with Microsoft Azure (CloudArchive) allows the university to create a secondary off-site copy of data into Azure for disaster recovery. The IT team is also taking steps to eventually us.

## Results

From the get-go, the IT team at Brown realized the Cohesity solution was going to set the university up for success. From an intuitive interface and seamless platform integration, to greatly reduced times for backups and recovery, the Cohesity architecture has freed up the team to focus on other projects and revolutionized the team's efficiency.

"Since deploying Cohesity, I have yet to arrive at the office in the morning and see a backup still running. While we gave our staff documentation on how to use the Cohesity platform, half of our associates didn't even need it because the solution is that easy to figure out," explains Menard. Cohesity Cloud Edition will allow the team to recover snapshots from its primary Cohesity cluster archived in Azure. If needed, the team will be able to recover full VMs into Azure, or perform file level recoveries either into Azure or back to on-prem systems. Using Azure as a secondary offsite copy and connecting the copies through Cohesity Cloud Edition gives the team tremendous agility and flexibility. The upgrade process with Cohesity is also greatly simplified. "An area of big savings for Brown University is found in the absolute ease of upgrades with Cohesity," explains Menard. "Where we used to set aside two days and people from various teams to perform upgrades in our previous environment, we now click a few buttons and go about our business."

Brown realized enormous time savings across several IT teams. In the old environment, backups would be running almost around the clock. Now instead of troubleshooting and working

to re-architect proxy servers to make backups work, the backups are well within the SLA windows. The VMware team no longer had to clean up snapshots and saved up to 10 hours per week once Cohesity was deployed.

The benefits for Brown University selecting Cohesity include:

- Greatly reduced time of backups and eliminated backup failures and orphaned snapshots. Time savings equaled an entire work day for a network administrator.
- Capex cost savings were near 50%, and Brown saved upwards of \$75K per year in network licensing and additional maintenance cost savings.
- Native integration with Microsoft Azure allows IT to set up secondary offsite copies in Cohesity Cloud Edition, providing many options for how to leverage the copies.

## Recap

Brown University has seen a transformation in its IT environment and can now embrace a virtualized architecture to bring its backup and recovery into next-generation technology. Cohesity has enabled the university to transform how it governs data, making managing secondary data simple and cost effective.