

Case Study

Milton Keynes University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (MKUH)

Milton Keynes University Hospital (MKUH) NHS Foundation Trust provides a full range of acute hospital services and an increasing number of specialist services to patients in Milton Keynes and the surrounding areas.

The hospital treats approximately 400,000 patients each year – both outpatient and emergency, employs more than 4,000 staff, and has around 550 beds. The Trust also entered into a partnership with the University of Buckingham in 2015 to establish the first independent medical school in the country, which opened in 2017.

The hospital has plans to become one of the most digitally mature sites in the UK and beyond, and as a result has an acute and constantly growing need for failsafe technology that will enable it to achieve its goals.

“With so many suppliers in the market it's vital to find and develop a successful working relationship. COOLSPIRiT has always gone above and beyond for storage and data protection. They never fail to answer the phone and are able to work with us to solve any problem.”

Craig York, Chief Technology Officer at MKUH

Challenge

MKUH's compute performance was suffering due to its incumbent storage system reaching the end of its life and causing a general slowdown across the hospital, affecting both the patient-facing clinical departments and the back-end admin departments.

The hospital urgently needed a new storage solution that could ensure smooth interaction between its hybrid on-premises and cloud-based infrastructure.

Chief Technology Officer (CTO) Craig York explained: “We were hitting performance problems. At the moment we have a split strategy and have a hybrid situation where we need significant storage on site as well as the cloud. Our old storage wasn't cutting it and was negatively impacting the business.”

York said the hospital has an ‘insatiable need’ for growth of both system performance and data storage, and needed a solution that had ten times the capacity of its existing solution.

As a result, the hospital turned to long-time IT partner COOLSPIRiT to help solve its growing storage headache. The two organisations have worked together since 2009 with COOLSPIRiT supplying MKUH with data protection and infrastructure solutions.

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Solution

COOLSPIRiT swung into action with partner Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) and its Nimble Storage technology to solve the on-premises and cloud storage requirements needed by MKUH in one fell swoop. The hospital was swiftly signed up to a six-week pilot of HPE Nimble's HF40 Adaptive Storage technology with added support from COOLSPIRiT, allowing the customer to try it out for itself before investing.

York said it was a real benefit to be able to see the technology in action and to make sure it addressed all the hospital's needs.

"Nimble gave us a brand-new Nimble pilot system and migrated our systems over to it so we could experience the benefits first-hand, all with limited impact to the organisation. All of their claims proved to be true, and my teams were very quickly able to get up and running," he explained. "In a reasonable amount of time we were able to copy data from the old system to the new system, and, once configured, our problems went away overnight."

He said because of that flexibility and option to test the technology to the max, the pilot was moved quickly into full procurement and migration, and the deal was done.

"Originally we had planned for a six-month data migration project, but due to our experience during the pilot, our team had such confidence in the system that it happened in two to three months," York said. "We were then able to retire the incumbent system much quicker than originally planned."

With COOLSPIRiT's expertise in data protection, the hospital continued to protect its new HPE Nimble system with Commvault, originally supplied by COOLSPIRiT and supported via its GUARDIAN desk. In addition, the hospital took the opportunity to migrate to a new subscription-based Commvault licensing model to help reduce costs and complexity.

Technology Implemented

- 2x 200TB HPE Nimble Storage HF40 Adaptive Dual Controllers across the hospital site (fibre synchronous replication) - following 6 weeks' demo run
- HPE 'Timeless' Controller Refresh service for Nimble Storage
- Protected with Commvault Data Protection and GUARDIAN Support

"COOLSPIRiT is a proper solution seller... They really get close to their customers and understand the challenges. HPE's portfolio is so broad and can do so many exciting things to accommodate so many opportunities. COOLSPIRiT really gets into the detail with customers and that is what stands them apart – they are all about solving big problems for real customers."

Alida Jinnah, HPE's Aligned Storage Specialist

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Benefits

Due to its hybrid set up, the hospital needed to be able to migrate data back and forth between the cloud and on-premises quickly and easily. Thanks to HPE and COOLSPIRiT, this is now a seamless transaction.

York said: "Now, when we migrate to the cloud, or back onsite, both our systems – Azure and Nimble – integrate nicely together, allowing us to seamlessly migrate data back and forth as needed," he said. "Because we are in the business of healthcare we don't have downtime – we are a 24/7 business. If systems go down, patient care and safety is put at risk. The Nimble technology plays a key part in ensuring that doesn't happen, and now we have a performing, reliable and stable system."

During the initial research phase with COOLSPIRiT, the hospital was also determined to ensure its latest investment also proved long-term value for money and was another reason it chose the HPE Nimble/COOLSPIRiT offering thanks to the 'Timeless' Technology Refresh Services model, which offers a set term of eligible support services (three or five years) and a one-time technology refresh during the contract. This means the hospital is using the latest version of hardware and ensures performance is always available, however long it has been in production.

This offering was essential, according to York.

"In the past, we have bought a system, and five years later at the end of the contract, it would grind to a halt. Now we have bought a system that is going to be automatically expanded in the future. COOLSPIRiT and HPE have ensured we have a satisfactory system at the beginning, middle and end of the contract."

Steve Clayton, VP of Sales at COOLSPIRiT, said the solution was perfect for a technically ambitious hospital like MKUH.

"MKUH is an early technology adopter and are really doing some cool stuff right now. This solution has given them vastly improved performance than they had before, meaning data is closer to hand, and the latency between data and application is reduced," he explained. "From a partnering perspective I don't think that the project would have happened without the proof of concept/pilot and the 'Timeless' support option - HPE's channel team, were integral in getting that signed off. That personal touch from HPE made all the difference."

"Storage is now not something that keeps me up at night – I have other things that keep me awake, but I know what HPE Nimble and COOLSPIRiT has developed, and are maintaining, is a system that works for us. I have the confidence that it is going to do that throughout the life of the contract. That is a vital offering for us from both HPE and COOLSPIRiT."

Craig York, Chief Technology Officer at MKUH



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