Case Study /

Aston University Digital Data Archiving

Aston University implements Arkivum/100 to deliver a campus-wide and cost-effective digital data archiving service.

Founded in 1895 and a University since 1966, Aston is a long established research-led University known for its world-class teaching quality and strong links to industry, government and commerce. Aston has been a leading university for graduate employment success for over 25 years. The University is consistently ranked in the UK's top 30 universities confirming its place amongst the elite.

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Aston has a growing research community and the amount of data they're generating is, of course, also increasing. Tackling the issue now with a long-term solution and in doing so demonstrating a commitment to our researchers was the right thing to do.
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Trevor Bayliss, IT Technical Director at Aston University

The Need

Aston University is one of the leading universities in the UK and is home to 550+ academics and researchers across more than 40 Schools and Research Groups.

Each of these groups is generating large and rapidly increasing volumes of data that are valuable assets for the University.

With new funder-mandated guidelines coming into force in May 2015 from bodies such as the EPSRC, the need to provide easy and long term access to this data is driving the need for a more cost-effective solution than existing ones based on traditional spinning disk.

The University wanted to take this opportunity to provide a campus-wide long-term digital data archiving service for academic research groups that have large volumes of data, long retention periods (10+ years), and that need to comply with research funder requirements for sharing and open access to research data.

To provide for the long-term archive requirement but also to deliver a clear message to research groups that data archiving is a very real issue and that it is being taken seriously at Aston, the University sought to procure a system with a contract term that would meet these needs.

To be cost-effective in the long-term, the system also needed to be centrally managed and this required the individual archiving policies for each of the groups that would be using the service for their research data sets. This would enable central IT to manage how the archive was being used and to plan for future expansion.

550

Number of academics and researchers working at Aston University.

The Solution

Working with S3, Arkivum/100™ was selected to deliver Janet-connected archive storage using a 12TB on-site gateway appliance that provides local cache storage and that also allows for future archive storage capacity expansion.

Data ingestion is controlled by a centrally managed Arkivum/100 archive policy framework. Aston University worked with research groups to define a number of archive policies based on a range of data-specific factors. The policies provided

Number of years that Aston University has commited to in providing data archiving to its research community.

10

a straightforward way to automate file ingestion that met funder-mandated requirements.

The system was initially rolled out to a number of ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) funded research projects in late 2014.

The Benefits

Using centrally managed archive policies, researchers only need to drop their files into the network staging area provided by the IT department and leave the rest of the archive process to Arkivum/100 that creates three copies of the data files for secure and integrity guaranteed long-term storage. With the fully-automated archive policies now in place, Aston University IT are able to run the system largely unattended so reducing their resource requirements and of course, costs.

The policies also simplify the on-boarding of new groups and departments that require data archiving services - IT simply create new policies that meet the needs of each new group or department.

With the archive system in place, Aston are also able to advertise and deliver the service to other campus departments that require assured long-term data archiving but that didn't have the data volumes to drive the need for a large-scale archive system. Departments such as Procurement and Finance are looking at the benefits available from the indemnity insurance backed Arkivum/100 system.

> **Arkivum really understood the issues we had around funder-mandated access to large data volumes that the higher eduction sector as a whole is also facing.**
>
> Trevor Bayliss, IT Technical Director at Aston University

About S3

Solid State Solutions (S3) was formed in 1988 as a Value Added Integrator of Data Storage and Storage Management Systems. Since then we have developed and evolved during a period of accelerated technological advancement to become specialists in identifying and providing bespoke data storage solutions across rapidly changing business landscapes.

Our success and longevity can be attributed to our attention to detail and our pledge to focus on our client's core business needs. Clients are diverse and range from SME's to Blue Chip companies however all are able to rely upon our expertise to access, manage and protect their business critical information.

S3 SOLID STATE SOLUTIONS

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Why Arkivum?

Every bit archived.

Arkivum is the leading provider of assured long-term and large-scale data archiving solutions to higher education and biomedical institutions in the UK. The company provides the only system on the market to guarantee 100% data integrity irrespective of the retention period by storing multiple data copies in disparate UK data centre locations in addition to an offline escrow copy.

Arkivum uses proven storage technology and open standards to deliver fast, efficient and secure online data access. Strong links with the University of Southampton IT Innovation Centre ensure that Arkivum has direct access to state-of-the-art research in digital preservation

Arkivum is certified and regularly audited to ISO27001 and the Arkivum service is connected to the UK Janet and N3 networks.