wasabi
hot cloud storage

CASE STUDY

The Hotchkiss School fully protects against ransomware with hyper-converged infrastructure from Nutanix+HYCU+Wasabi

HOTCHKISS

USE CASE:

- Off-site backup and recovery
- Ransomware mitigation
- Active archive & data retrieval

INDUSTRY:

- Education

ALLIANCE PARTNERS:

NUTANIX

HYCU

Overview

The Hotchkiss School is an independent boarding school sprawling over 500 rural acres in Northwestern Connecticut. Serving more than 900 staff and students, The Hotchkiss School provides students in grades 9-12 with all of the trappings of a private university. Departments range from admissions, financial aid, and alumni development to athletics, finance, and plant facilities. There is even a farm on campus that provides much of the school's food. Pair these with student activities including academics, athletics, cocurricular programs, clubs, and publications; it becomes clear The Hotchkiss School is a lively and bustling campus.

Challenge: Building a Low-Cost, World-Class Infrastructure

While the Hotchkiss School's busy campus creates a lot of data, for a smaller school, their previous multi-tier storage solution was far too expensive. "Our primary challenges were the cost of cloud storage, the cost of cloud storage, and the cost of cloud storage. The amount of storage that we needed was not realistic with Amazon or Azure. Not just from tiers and data consumption, but because of the egress fees" joked Kevin Warenda, the Director of Information Technology Services at The Hotchkiss School. With a small IT department, the team needed a simple, cost-effective storage solution to transition their data onto a world-class, S3-compliant hyper-converged infrastructure.

Partner Network Promotes the Path to Cloud Storage

Building that hyper-converged infrastructure is what led Warenda and the team to Wasabi hot cloud storage. Warenda first began by deploying Nutanix AHV, a secure management platform used to consolidate and structure data. Next, the team found HYCU to provide backup and data migration. By searching both Nutanix and HYCU's partner networks for a low-cost, high-performance storage solution, Warenda and The Hotchkiss School found and trialed Wasabi hot cloud storage. "Wasabi was easy to sign up for with their free trial," said Warenda. "We experienced the high performance, and were able to go right into a 'month-to-month' and pay for what we stored during the free trial on an ongoing basis."

> ***Because Wasabi is cost-effective and high performing, we don't have to choose between what's more important in terms of the data we're backing up – we can send it all to our Wasabi cloud. Wasabi has enabled us to fully protect our environment."***
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> **— Kevin Warenda,** Director of Information Technology Services at The Hotchkiss School

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Wasabi + Nutanix + HYCU Create a Seamless Solution

In The Hotchkiss School's fully-deployed solution, Nutanix software operates as a single-pane-of-glass hypervisor, with HYCU backing up data to their Wasabi cloud account. Because Wasabi, Nutanix, and HYCU operate as technology partners, all three providers collaborate seamlessly. "The solution understands how to use the Nutanix software itself, there's no solution on top of that. HYCU is working in conjunction with the Nutanix hypervisor to take snapshots and copy data just the same as it is looking at Wasabi as an S3-compliant storage target to move files into the cloud." While Wasabi functions successfully for The Hotchkiss School as a storage target, Warenda shares how The Hotchkiss School's team also uses Wasabi as a retrieval site for their backups, "We prefer retrieving data from Wasabi. We're using the solution as an active archive in some sense, it's constantly being used for data retrieval rather than retrieving files from a local storage system on-premises." If the need for extensive data restoration ever arises, using Wasabi as a retrieval site would prove invaluable. "If we need to restore files down, we could easily copy individual files or full backups from Wasabi to our server cluster."

Data Security Plays a Pivotal Role:

Protecting sensitive student information with a secure data solution is critical across the education industry due to the prevalent threat of ransomware attacks. "Security is obviously always on our mind. Data security is such a high-value need because schools are being targeted for things like ransomware now more than ever. It's not really 'if' an attack happens anymore, it's 'when'" Warenda explained, "It's important to actually have secure copies of our backup data in the event that a ransomware attack happens. Having a storage partner like Wasabi, which we know is secure, is critical to being able to restore operations quickly. Because it is cost-effective and high performing, we don't have to choose between what's more important in terms of the data we're backing up – we can send it all to Wasabi. In that sense, Wasabi has enabled us to fully protect our environment."

Wasabi's Price Predictability Seals the Deal

Low-cost storage was a deciding factor for The Hotchkiss School in choosing Wasabi, but cost predictability played an equally significant role. "As a school, having a variable expense is just not realistic. We have to plan ahead for an entire year. We have a set amount of budget, but the usage of our services may change," shared Warenda. "With Wasabi, we don't have to think about whether a department is putting up or taking down data more often. With other cloud storage providers, that would've cost us even more, and we would have to plan ahead for that. The fact that there are no egress fees [or API request fees] is one of the best features of Wasabi's cost model."

Looking Ahead: Surveillance Storage in the Cloud

The Hotchkiss School intends on leveraging Wasabi's partner base to find solutions in the video surveillance sector, "Our solution with Wasabi is enabling us to think about other use cases. We're benefiting from the fact that Wasabi has so many additional partnerships. We just saw a new partnership with Tiger Tech that offers a video surveillance data bridge. We can add a connector from our local CCTV camera server and instead of using local storage for that, we could actually just use Wasabi's cloud as native storage, which saves us money and provides us the retention we need. The ongoing partnerships that Wasabi is developing, which started with HYCU and Nutanix for us, extend the value that we can get from the storage we already have."

For any company looking to leverage a cloud storage solution, Kevin Warenda offers the following advice; "Wasabi is super easy to try. Start a trial and test it out for your use case. That's how we got into it. It's a low-risk, low-cost way to see if Wasabi meets your needs. It worked for us and I think it will work for anyone else looking for low-cost, high-performance, secure cloud storage."

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