

Sophia School Protects Data from Wide-Area Disasters and Ransomware Attack Risks with Wasabi via SINET Connectivity

Sophia achieved a remote backup system Secure and high-speed data transfer via the university-recommended SINET connection by adding Wasabi Technologies to its operations, meeting the urgent need for off-site backup as a safeguard against widespread disasters and ransomware attacks.

Overview

Sophia School is an educational institution founded in 1913 by the Society of Jesus, including Sophia University. Guided by its founding principle, “*Sophia – Bringing the World Together,*” its educational spirit, “*For Others, With Others,*” Sophia University, as Japan’s first Catholic university, has pursued education based on Christian humanism, long emphasizing internationalism. It is highly regarded for its educational approach that balances academic pursuits with humanistic education while respecting diversity.

Challenges

Sophia University has been advancing a project since 2023 to renew the workstations for approximately 700 staff members. Aiming for more flexible working styles, the project targeted replacing desktop computers with notebook PCs by the 2025 academic year. This initiative also included renewing the staff file server. This file server is used by staff across all six departments of the institution: General Affairs, Human Resources, Finance, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Academic Information. It stores over 50 terabytes of operational data critical to the management of the school corporation, including the university. Any failure of this server would force a complete halt in operations.



USE CASE:

- Backup & recovery
- Disaster recovery

INDUSTRY:

- Higher Education



What we desperately wanted to achieve as soon as possible has finally taken shape. Even when we had backups before, I always worried if they were truly reliable. With Wasabi enabling remote backup, even if the file server is attacked, we now have a clear path to recover from the backup data, eliminating some of the risk. In that sense, the mental burden on the Information Systems Office staff has been significantly eased.

– **Koichi Aoto**, Administrative Director, Academic Information Bureau, Information Systems Office, Sophia School Corporation

This time, the server was procured on premises to maintain the familiar usability. However, the key consideration here was the data backup system. The Information Systems Office of the Academic Information Bureau strongly desired to implement remote backup to cloud storage at this juncture. Previously, even the campus file server backups were stored on the network. This offered no guarantee that the data would be protected in the event of a large-scale disaster. Furthermore, ransomware attacks were an even greater concern. The severity of these attacks has worsened year by year, leading to a desire for data protection in locations where network isolation is possible and the threat is less likely to reach. Mr. Koji Matsuda, Senior Manager of the Academic Information Bureau's Information Systems Office at Sophia School Corporation, stated:

"We were in a situation where we could be targeted at any time, and implementing remote backup had always been a challenge. This project to overhaul the entire staff environment came at the perfect time, and we were determined to make it happen as a key security enhancement."

Solutions

After evaluation, Wasabi Hot Cloud Storage emerged as the leading candidate for the backup destination cloud storage. The primary reason was its low cost and predictable pricing. Hiroji Nakajima, Team Leader at the Information Systems Office, Academic Information Bureau, Sophia School Corporation, explains:

"For this file server backup, the most critical factor was staying within the budget allocated from the overall project. Wasabi was the only cloud storage solution that fit within that range. Additionally, considering our planned five-year usage period, the ability to lock in the total cost for five years upfront through a single contract was a significant advantage."

Furthermore, the pricing structure, which avoids download transfer fees should data become necessary, was well-suited for educational institutions like universities, where securing budgets mid-fiscal year can be challenging.

Further solidifying the decision was the recent announcement by Wasabi Technologies in December 2024 enabling connectivity via SINET, the academic information network provided by the National Institute of Informatics. This announcement came as the university's evaluation was entering its final stages. Koichi Aoto, Administrative Director of the Information Systems Office, Academic Information Bureau, Sophia School Corporation, explains.

"Our university strongly recommends securely connecting new cloud services to the campus network via this network provided by the National Institute of Informatics, considering security and other factors. We already do this for public clouds and SaaS, and the fact that Wasabi became available for SINET connection at this time was highly welcome."



In the current environment, where ransomware attacks could strike at any time, implementing remote backup had always been a challenge. This project to overhaul the entire staff environment came at the perfect time, and we were determined to make it happen as a key security enhancement measure.

— Koji Matsuda - Senior Manager, Academic Information Bureau, Information Systems Office, Sophia School Corporation



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— Koji Matsuda - Senior Manager, Academic Information Bureau, Information Systems Office, Sophia School Corporation

For these reasons, Wasabi was selected as the cloud storage solution for remote backup.

Furthermore, Wasabi's object lock feature enables the creation of immutable backups that cannot be overwritten or deleted, which was crucial for more robust ransomware protection. By making backups immutable, it prevents ransomware from encrypting the data.

For connecting the file server to Wasabi, Veeam Backup & Replication was adopted as the software managing data transfer. The reasons for selection were its high affinity with Wasabi () and its excellent mechanism for detecting data differences to avoid redundant transfers.

Conclusion

The remote backup using Wasabi commenced ahead of schedule in June 2025. With ransomware attacks targeting educational institutions occurring in the 2025 fiscal year, the Information Systems Office accelerated its implementation.

Currently, file server data is regularly backed up to Wasabi. Due to the incremental backup nature, this process reportedly takes only about 20 minutes. Restores are verified on a file-by-file basis, and even if a full data restoration is required, recovery is projected to take less than a week.

"What we desperately wanted to achieve as soon as possible has finally materialized. Previously, even with backups in place, we always worried if it was truly secure. With Wasabi enabling offsite backups, we now have a clear path to recover from backup data even if the file server is attacked, eliminating some risk. In that sense, the mental burden on Information Systems Office staff has been significantly eased," (Mr. Aoto)

The implementation also yielded benefits in terms of operational load. Despite adding the task of remote backup, the Information Systems Office's workload hasn't increased because we adopted cloud storage. Since June 2025, the university has also been using Wasabi as the backup destination for multiple on-premises business systems. Unlike on-premises backup servers, eliminating maintenance man-hours and associated costs is another highly valued benefit.

"Wasabi is well-suited for educational institutions because it offers SINET connectivity and low-cost cloud storage. We also appreciate the solid support directly from the vendor. We hope you continue providing this excellent service." Mr. Matsuda expressed these sentiments, placing his hopes in Wasabi Technologies.



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