



# EUROPEAN MEDICINES AGENCY REMEDIES ITS DATA MANAGEMENT TO DELIVER A HEALTHY FUTURE

Case Study

“If we’re running more efficiently, the services that we can offer the business are much more efficient. We’re offering fully backed up services, storage and access to a high level of service, which means the users are much happier.” David Drakeford, head of ICT Infrastructure, European Medicines Agency



EUROPEAN MEDICINES AGENCY  
SCIENCE MEDICINES HEALTH

## Objective

To improve the efficiency of its backup and archiving while simplifying overall data management

## Approach

Met with HP partner to discuss data management challenges ahead of a move to a new Data Recovery location; visited reference sites before formal tender process

## IT improvements

- Simplified the management of backups and archives, making more efficient use of IT manpower, saving costs and directing resources to more productive services
- Ensured a scalable and transparent future for data storage, safeguarding long-term business processes
- Layered the management of hardware, meaning upgrades can be carried out with no danger of disruption to services

## Business benefits

- Secured the storage and recovery of records, protecting the Agency from legal threats
- Improved data management enables the provision of new services, securing the European Medicines Agency role within healthcare sector



The European Medicines Agency (EMA) is a regulatory body of the European Union, based in London. It is responsible for the scientific evaluation of medicines for human and veterinary use, developed by pharmaceutical companies for distribution in the European Union. It coordinates these activities among 27 member states and associated institutions.

The Agency’s remit has expanded since its foundation in 1995. It monitors whether the benefit-risk balance of a medicine has changed since it was authorised. It helps stimulate innovation and research in the pharmaceutical sector, e.g. by publishing guidelines to pharmaceutical companies and regulators on how to demonstrate quality, safety and efficacy of medicines. A dedicated office, established in 2005, provides special assistance to small and medium-sized enterprises.

With the workload increasing, and the Agency’s findings needing to be backed-up and accessed, the scalability and efficiency of data storage had become a pressing business concern. To fulfil its mandate as the regulator of European medicines, the Agency must have access to every record, all of the time.

### HP customer case study:

HP’s D3 solution brings together the backup, recovery and archiving processes to simplify data management

### Industry:

Public Sector

"There are new regulations, new medicines and, potentially, new areas for us to examine coming through continuously," says David Drakeford, EMA's head of ICT Infrastructure. "This has a dramatic impact on the amount of data we need to store and retrieve. We're now hosting lots of virtual meetings and the data involved in streaming and storing these is huge. All of this has consequences; the general trend is towards a massive increase in storage."

## Unified backup and archival strategy first, scalability in the future

If scalability was a long-term challenge, the most immediate problem was the alignment of the backup, recovery and archiving processes. EMA has a large amount of infrequently accessed data that needs to be easily accessible for a large number of users. "For legal reasons, we need to trace every product and all its associated information, and preserve that information in a state that is re-readable for up to 30 years," says Drakeford. "Also, we have business continuity capability in-house, so we have to keep, effectively, duplicates of each."

With EMA's tape-based backup proving unmanageable, Drakeford and his team wanted to move more of the workload to a disk-based system. The catalyst for change came as the Agency made detailed plans to build a new Data Recovery site at its Westferry Circus offices in London. It was at this stage SysMicro joined the conversation. SysMicro is an HP partner with a long standing relationship with the EMA; HP has supplied the bulk of EMA's storage servers since 2003.

In simple terms, the aim of the EMA is to get more value from its data with less spend, managed by fewer people. Aware of these challenges, SysMicro put forward a unified data management solution from HP, D3. The solution is the work of HP Professional Services, an attempt to create a single product which could solve storage, data management and compliance issues.

D3 marries CommVault Simpana software to HP X9000 IBRIX network storage system to bring together the backup, recovery and archiving processes. It is highly scalable, transparent and provides centralised management. At the very least, it meant the EMA would not need to consider two separate products to manage data management and business continuity, reducing costs and complexity.

HP Professional Services were invited to present the D3 solution and mock up how it would work within the EMA environment. SysMicro then arranged a visit to a reference site to see elements of the solution in action.

## Smart software layered on scalable hardware

CommVault Simpana enables backup, block level de-duplication and the archiving of files and emails from a single common software platform. It is able to make multiple copies of backups to various media in different locations, and it is possible to write to, disk and tape. The backup software is network-aware and able to work in slow speed links during the day and take extra bandwidth at night.

EMA were surprised by the breadth of the solution, but were soon convinced of its value. "The more we learnt about this, the more we saw the benefits of having one system to manage this," says Oscar Diez, EMA's data centre head. "If you can have everything in one place, in the long term, that's better. But why did we choose this solution? Because it was extremely scalable."

Requiring only a very simple disk to backup to and recover from, the HP solution uses a Network Attached Storage (NAS) platform with low cost disk drawers holding 140TB in a 4U shelf. The platform can scale to many Petabytes by adding more shelves and additional Blade-based processors. The HP IBRIX X9720 scalable NAS acts as a network file share for the backup application and a very large repository for video files. It can see other NAS platforms and replicate data without recourse to the CommVault Simpana software. Of particular interest to the EMA, it can also mark files so they cannot be over written, meaning that long term archives cannot be deleted until the due date has arrived.

Phase one of the implementation has already been completed with the configuration of the Westferry Circus X9720 in 59TB usable form (82TB capacity block). Phase two is to expand the Westferry X9720 by adding another 82TB capacity block taking total usable capacity to 118TB. A second X9720 will be commissioned at another site, using CommVault DASH Copy to replicate data.

## Efficient management, improved services

"There are two issues driving efficiencies in the ICT function", says Drakeford. "The smooth running of the agency, and a legal obligation for both record archiving storage and transparency." He is satisfied the new solution has met both.



“From an ICT perspective, selecting a product like this, one that works and does exactly what we want, means we’re running much more efficiently,” says Drakeford. “If we’re running more efficiently, the services that we can offer the business are much more efficient. So we’re offering fully backed up services, storage and access to a high level of service, which means the users are much happier.”

At a practical level, the archives are also easier to manage. They can now be controlled through the graphic user interface, and do not require the efforts of a full-time IT person, cutting management costs.

Having the CommVault Simpana software running on top of the HP hardware means upgrades can be managed with no impact on operations. Data can be migrated online while modifications are done to the hardware, without having to forklift the data into a new storage facility.

Looking ahead, the archival element of the solution, the X9720, is extremely scalable. Not only does this cover off the risk of strains on future capacity, it adds new possibilities in terms of service options. As more performance and capacity blocks can be added to the existing systems, the EMA can confidently handle an explosion in additional data. This means, for example, its video conferences could be recorded as-live, rather than made available as transcripts, making for more compelling, collaborative reports.

## Customer at a glance

### Primary hardware

- HP X9720 IBRIX Network Storage System
- Network Attached Storage Platform

### Primary software

- CommVault Simpana HSM Software

### HP services

- Professional Services

“It means we can jump on areas that are growing very quickly,” says Diez. “Previously we might not have had the capacity to cope or been able to move quickly.”

Drakeford expects the professional management of the archives to play a central role in the Agency’s future success. The EMA is storing an increasing amount of data on counterfeit medicines, a growing problem across Europe, as well as new proprietary drugs, the details of which would be worth millions of Euros if they could be accessed illegally. In addition, the EMA’s judgements on new drugs can have a serious impact on the Stock Market valuations of pharmaceutical manufacturers. The sharing, updating and protection will be an ongoing concern.



## Get connected

[www.hp.com/go/getconnected](http://www.hp.com/go/getconnected)

Get the insider view on tech trends, alerts, and HP solutions for better business outcomes

Share with colleagues 

