

# Uk law firm relies on adaptec external storage

[Business](#)



J.

Keith Park & Co Integrates External Storage into Custom Legal Services Software...Problem  
Company's storage of mission-critical legal data was proving to be increasingly unreliable  
Solution  
Adaptec external storage for increased reliability and protection  
Benefits-Higher level of data resiliency and protection-Increased speed of data delivery-Total confidence in fail-over system-ROI achieved in just six weeks  
Pull-Quote " I've used lots of Adaptec products, and have been nothing but impressed. They are completely reliable." Lorraine Anne Dotchin, Technical Director IT Systems, J.

Keith Park ; Co Solicitors  
Introduction  
J. Keith Park ; Co. Solicitors has been practicing law in Northwest England for more than twenty years, representing clients in everything from criminal cases to personal injury and commercial suits. The firm's entire operation relies on a custom legal services software package that integrates all of its legal documents and data, providing an efficient environment within which several partners and 150 staffers manage client cases. During any given workday, the system maintains some 60, 000 live records. The Challenge  
Protecting Client Data  
In the U.

K, law offices are required to utilize law society compliance software for case management, according to Lorraine Anne Dotchin, Technical Director IT Systems for J. Keith Park & Co. " These systems manage all relevant client account information, from the progression of a case, to legal filings, to funds spent on behalf of the client," explains Dotchin. " Everything we do revolves around this system, and if it goes down, 150 plus people stop working."

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Increasing Lack of Confidence in the Old System Unfortunately, this was happening on an alarmingly regular basis—as much as twice a month at J.

Keith Park & Co. There was even an occasion when data was lost and the firm spent a full-day recovering it. “ I didn’t have confidence in the system. It had fairly regularly proved not to be resilient in terms of data protection and storage,” says Dotchin, who added that if clients aren’t served properly due to mismanaged data, the firm can be held liable. “ If anything happened to a tenth of one percent of our data, it would be a disaster.” The Impact of Data Loss Data loss could mean that a client court date reminder isn’t triggered, and an attorney fails to make an appearance.

Or a client’s financial records are lost—a situation which happened once at the firm, requiring several days of backtracking over paper files to recover and reconstruct the data. The Decision to Replace Under-Performing Storage Solution In early 2003, the license for the firm’s legal services software package was due for renewal. And while Dotchin was happy with the solution, she had serious concerns about its built-in cluster storage array. “ It was slow,” says Dotchin, “ and it was ineffective when it went into fail-over mode.” Bottom line, Dotchin believed that the RAID controller cards embedded in the solution were under-performing. Park decided it would renew the software but replace the storage with an in-house cluster.

The Solution Past Experience with Adaptec Makes an Impression Dotchin evaluated several external storage solutions, including Adaptec. She had used Adaptec RAID and SCSI controller cards for years as a senior member of IT teams in several other companies and had always opted for Adaptec

because of its reliability, strong support, and cost benefits. “ I’ve used lots of Adaptec products, and have been nothing but impressed,” says Dotchin. “ The company’s products are completely reliable and its back-up, support, and training are first class.” Final Decision Comes Down to Configurability and Speed Still, Dotchin wanted to be sure, and looked at several other products as part of her due diligence.

Ultimately, Adaptec’s configurability and speed outweighed other offerings. In June of 2003, Adaptec’s external storage was implemented as the primary storage workhorse to back up all of the firm’s data and run all of its core applications. The system offers redundancy/failover features so if a drive fails, it immediately switches over to a hot-swappable spare, ensuring that no data is lost. The ResultsROI in Just Six WeeksThus far, Dotchin has been pleased. “ There’s really no comparison to what we had before,” she says. “ Adaptec gives us the speed we require and because of the built in redundancy, the system is very resilient.

” In fact, Dotchin says that within the first six weeks, the system paid for itself when a hard drive in the main array failed. “ One of the spare drives took over and kicked the dead drive off the list. No data was lost,” says Dotchin who was away from the office at the time. When she returned to find the orange light indicating what had happened, she pulled the dead disk drive out, replaced it, and went on with her day. No More Need to Take System Down” The old system had hot-swappable drives and was designed to cope with this kind of situation, but recovery would have been more difficult,” explains Dotchin.

“ The system would potentially have had to be brought down and rebuilt offline, which could have taken all night.” Future Plans for Archived Client DataMoving forward, J. Keith Park & Co. intends to leverage Adaptec to improve the storage of its closed files—a massive amount of client and client archive data. U.

K. law requires that attorneys keep files for up to 12 years after the completion of a case. During that period, government agencies or other law practices may request those files—and they must be delivered. In addition, members of the firm also find frequent need for this archived data to perform their jobs. Improving Access and Increasing Data ProtectionThree years ago, the firm went from an antiquated microfiche system to an e-archiving system to store old case files.

This e-archiving was done at individual branch offices as well as three main office sites. Dotchin now plans to use Adaptec external storage and iSCSI to migrate all its archiving into one central storage area. Given that archive requests are made almost daily, this will increase the speed of retrieval while enhancing data protection. Users Cite Increased Speed and Reduced DowntimeSeveral senior members of J. Keith Park & Co have expressed great satisfaction with the Adaptec storage solution, both in terms of increased speed and the avoidance of downtime. “ In the past, I had little confidence in the storage system’s ability to perform its function,” says Dotchin.

“ Adaptec has done the job superbly.” Solution FeaturesImproved System ResilienceAdaptec maximized uptime and allowed for preemptive action in the event of a failure. Total Confidence in Data ProtectionAdaptec eliminated

storage performance issues, restoring confidence that company data was protected. Scalability to Support Future Growth Will accommodate future storage requirements, including the storage and retrieval of archived data. Adaptec are exhibiting at Storage Expo the UK's largest and most important event dedicated to data storage, now in its 5th year, the show features a comprehensive FREE education programme, and over 90 exhibitors at the National Hall, Olympia, London from 12 - 13 October 2005 <http://www.storage-expo.com>