

# U.S. Department of State Manages and Protects Microsoft® SharePoint® Environment for 30,000 Users with AvePoint

## Customer Profile

The U.S. Department of State's mission is to shape and sustain a peaceful, prosperous, just, and democratic world and foster conditions for stability and progress for the benefit of the American people and people everywhere.

## Location

Washington, D.C.

## Industry

Public Sector

## Platform

SharePoint

## Solution

- AvePoint Compliance Guardian
- DocAve Backup and Restore
- DocAve Content Manager
- DocAve Migrator
- DocAve Report Center
- DocAve Storage Manager

## Critical Needs

- Flexible SharePoint backup and fast, granular content recovery
- BLOB externalization for a rapidly growing environment
- The ability to scan and identify sensitive content on a scheduled basis

## Success Highlights

- Conducted full and incremental backups on a scheduled basis and quickly recovered lost, deleted, or corrupted data with full fidelity for end users
- Externalized Binary Large Object (BLOB) content according to site quotas across 13-terabyte (TB) environment and reduced data stored in the SharePoint content database by 90 percent
- Conducted scans for Personally Identifiable Information (PII) across the environment on a scheduled basis and delivered reports to security and information architecture (IA) teams to help protect sensitive information

## The Challenge

Responsible for leading the U.S. in its foreign policy initiatives, the Department of State has more than 30,000 employees dedicated to achieving its mission. Microsoft SharePoint acts as a critical system to give workers access to the information they need at any given time – whether it's through shared files for collaboration or up-to-date organizational information.

Due to the widespread use, the Department has already amassed more than 13 TB of content in SharePoint... and growing. "Our SharePoint content has grown more than 50 percent in the last year alone," said Terrence Sheridan, SharePoint Database Administrator at the Department. "We're seeing a lot of use across our environment."

With user adoption on the rise and content proliferating rapidly, the Department saw a need to bolster its ability to manage – and ultimately protect – SharePoint. The organization's most immediate needs were in the areas of SharePoint backup and reporting. "SharePoint alone wouldn't allow us to easily restore items from backups while retaining metadata," Sheridan said. "Our information architecture team also needed the ability to access auditing reports beyond what native abilities would allow."

In order to expand on its ability to efficiently administer SharePoint and provide effective service to its end users, the department immediately sought a third-party SharePoint management solution.

## The AvePoint Solution

After evaluating several options, the Department chose AvePoint's DocAve Software – the enterprise-class management platform for SharePoint. With DocAve, the Department could access the tools it needed from a single, centralized console. "Having everything in one place with DocAve is valuable," Sheridan said. "We don't need to go here for one tool and there for another."

DocAve enabled the Department to quickly resolve two of its biggest challenges – SharePoint backup and reporting. With DocAve, the department can back up SharePoint according to its specific needs and quickly restore items with full fidelity. It can also report on performance, usage, and security across the environment. "We run full backups every three weeks with DocAve and incremental backups every four hours," Sheridan said. "DocAve is the only solution that enables to do that and restore at the item level for our users while maintaining metadata. That's huge for us."

Once the initial concerns were dealt with, the Department expanded its use of DocAve to deal with the growing amount of data in SharePoint. Administrators could not only easily move content across the environment for end users, but could also externalize data to optimize performance. "With DocAve, we've set 50-gigabyte quotas for sites, since some of our users store lots of attachments and media files in SharePoint," Sheridan said. "By externalizing BLOB data, we've been able to reduce our content database size to 10 percent of what it was."

Once its environment was efficiently managed with DocAve, the Department looked for ways to better protect the information held within it – specifically Personally Identifiable Information. "We wanted to ensure information wasn't leaking between environments," said Sheridan. "To do that, we needed a tool that could scan and identify PII throughout SharePoint."

The Department implemented AvePoint Compliance Guardian. Compliance Guardian mitigates risk from the moment data is created through its entire lifecycle. The Department can scan and analyze data at the file and content level to identify PII throughout its environment and take the necessary steps to remove it. Just like with DocAve, the Department is able to run Compliance

Guardian scans on a scheduled basis according to its specific needs – with a full scan taking place every three weeks and daily incremental scans to analyze any new data created. "Compliance Guardian allows us to scan for exactly the information we need to find in SharePoint – such as PII or even just specific components of PII," Sheridan said. "We can even scan headers and footers in documents – there is no other tool on the market that will do that for us."

Using Compliance Guardian, the Department is able to create comprehensive reports that it can deliver to the security team, which will then work with site collection owners to resolve any issues. "Compliance Guardian has become a central tool for our IT, IA, and security teams," Sheridan said.

In the future, the Department will migrate its data from SharePoint 2010 to a hybrid SharePoint 2016 environment to take advantage of the latest platform features and move specific workloads to the cloud. In addition to utilizing DocAve to simplify the migration, the Department is also able to utilize Compliance Guardian to migrate information securely. "Compliance Guardian will allow us to scan our content before our migration ensure the data we're sending to the cloud is free of PII."

## The Bottom Line

Maintaining and administering a large, growing SharePoint environment required significant effort not just for the Department's IT team, but also its IA and security teams. Working with AvePoint, the organization was able to not only deliver more effective backup, reporting, and management capabilities, but also ensure organizational information is protected and stored in the correct location. "To say that AvePoint tools are valuable to us can't be stressed enough," Sheridan said.



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**- TERRENCE SHERIDAN,**  
SharePoint Database Administrator, U.S.  
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