

Adheris Processes Over 7 Million Prescription Records in Just a Few Hours

Adheris, Inc., partners with many of the nation's largest drugstores, as well as smaller independent pharmacies, to provide timely information about prescription medicines that help patients self-manage their routine prescriptions for chronic diseases such as high blood pressure, diabetes, asthma, and high cholesterol. Through its proprietary adherence intervention software program, Adheris works with pharmacies to track a patient's "de-identified" prescription activity to determine if that patient has renewed the prescription as ordered by his/her physician. If Adheris finds that the patient has not renewed their prescription, the pharmacy will send a letter (based on the information provided by Adheris to the pharmacy) to that patient reminding him or her of the importance of taking regular medication for treatment of the disease in question.

The efficacy of this program has been shown through control group comparison and analysis, which verifies the value of this approach to reinforce the physician-patient relationship in helping patients understand the critical role their medications plays in improving their health and maintaining their quality of life. As Steven Cardinal, VP of Information Technology at Adheris, states, "Basically, our job is to keep folks staying healthy by encouraging them to adhere to the medication schedule prescribed by their physicians."

External Storage Becomes a Necessity

When Adheris was founded twelve years ago, it started with only a few retail pharmacy chains; therefore, the company was able to analyze its pharmacy clients de-identified prescription data using a few SQL servers with 4 and 9 gigabyte internal hard drives. However, as Adheris continued to grow over the past five years, its IT Department began to realize that it needed to move away from internal storage and separate the storage from the servers. The department believed this approach would give Adheris both network flexibility and a growth path.

Searching for the Right Vendor

Adheris began searching for a data storage system upgrade that would enable the company to easily manage its data storage, while facilitating the data mining application. In reviewing its options, Adheris never really considered the big name providers such as EMC. Cardinal notes, "We were looking for storage providers that were more attuned to small and mid-sized companies' budgets." It was while Adheris was looking at the Hitachi and Compaq storage systems that it came across Winchester Systems. The company's convenient location and the caliber of its



engineers clinched the deal.

In Cardinal's own words, "The engineers at Winchester Systems showed us that they were flexible and eager to work within our budget, thereby analyzing our needs, the technology that we had available, and our expected growth pattern. It was a very good fit!"

The engineering team at Winchester Systems recommended and installed FlashDisk OpenRAID direct-attached systems (DAS) connected to the servers via SCSI. This solution gave the company the higher access speed needed to speed up its applications, while meeting the company's budget requirements.

From DAS to a SAN Architecture

As successful as this architecture was at the time, Adheris' data handling requirements continued to grow as a result of two further developments: (1) the company continued to acquire

additional pharmacy chain clients; (2) the IT Department developed a new application that predicted the expected compliance of new drugs based on analysis of historical data for similar classes of drugs that were currently on the market. This new application was data and transaction intensive, and thus slowed down the network and strained the SCSI infrastructure.

Adheris again called upon Winchester Systems' engineers who recommended that Adheris take advantage of its trade-in-program to upgrade to an all Fibre Channel FlashDisk OpenSAN. Today, Adheris now accesses 25 terabytes with a complement of six FlashDisk SCSI systems and two FlashDisk OpenSANs, with multiple expansion units. By the end of 2005, Adheris's IT Department expects to have over 35 terabytes of capacity.

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Realized Benefits:

Speed

Cardinal notes the benefits of the solution: "We get a lot more done in a day. We typically have very small time windows from the time we get de-identified prescription information from the drugstores to the time that we have to bring it into our system and start looking for the trends."

Flexibility

In addition to OpenSAN, Winchester also provided a virtualization software solution that gives Adheris the flexibility to manage and utilize the

full capacity of its system as its daily requirements change. The software layer maximizes throughput by automatically splitting up components of its database across different arrays.

Outstanding Customer Service

Cardinal recommends Winchester Systems to any company that has to manage a lot of data. He concludes, "Winchester Systems takes good care of us. For example, we have FlashAlert installed so that Winchester Systems is notified automatically if there are any problems with our system. This means that we may hear from Winchester Systems even before we know we have a problem. The folks at Winchester Systems are always available, even coming in at off hours. Their turn-around time has always been great."

For more information on iSCSI, SAN, NAS and SATA solutions from Winchester Systems go to www.winsys.com

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101 Billerica Ave., Bldg. 5, Billerica, MA 01862 • 800-325-3700 • 781-265-0200 • fax: 781-265-0201 • www.winsys.com