

How Colchester Institute Recovered from a Crippling Ransomware Attack within Days



CHALLENGES

- VMware environments & ESXi infrastructure encrypted
- All systems compromised, admin accounts disabled and anti-virus consoles deleted
- Email servers deleted, no communication available to external sources, students, staff
- Senior leadership concerned about the rise in ransomware attacks within education as breaches could lead to loss learning, coursework, financial records, and COVID-19 testing info

RESULTS

- 0% data loss
- \$0 paid in ransom
- 100% data recovery from ransomware within 10 days

“This could’ve been a crippling incident, but I am proud to say Rubrik saved the day, fully protecting our critical systems including finance, student records, and admissions data.”

The first sign of the ransomware attack that hit Colchester Institute was on a Monday morning in April 2021. After the Easter weekend, Ben Williams, IT Services Manager, came into the office and assumed business as usual. When trying to login to his systems, however, he discovered that all admin accounts had been disabled. His nightmare was confirmed when the IT Services team found a ransom note on one of their physical servers.

“Sophisticated and malicious, the breach destroyed mission critical areas of our infrastructure by deleting email and other servers, domain controllers, and anti-virus consoles as well as encrypting our entire virtual environment, and its underlying platform” recalled Williams. There was no email communication available to inform external contacts, suppliers, staff or students.

RUBRIK AND KHIPU PARTNER TOGETHER TO SAVE THE DAY

“As soon as we were aware of the breach, my engineers contacted Rubrik and KHIPU Networks immediately. This could’ve been a crippling incident, but I am proud to say Rubrik saved the day, fully protecting our critical data systems including finance, student records, and admissions data,” Williams stated.

Breach protection with instant recovery should be a top priority within any organization’s cyber security strategy. By implementing Rubrik Zero Trust Data Security, Colchester was able to recover instantly with no data loss. The institute returned to the most recent clean copy with just one click. “Rubrik safeguarded our backups. Due to its native immutability, 100% of our backups were protected against corruption and deletion,” Williams explained.

Colchester Institute was able to analyze the impact of the attack, determining exactly what files were affected and where, and detect any anomalies within their environment. “Thanks to Rubrik, we were able to keep the lights on and continue to deliver a robust service to our students and staff.”

COLCHESTER INVITES EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS TO PURCHASE RUBRIK

“With ransomware on the rise and the prevalence of attacks in education, we simply could not have recovered as fast or as well without Rubrik and the support of the team at KHIPU Networks. We invite other educational establishments concerned about ransomware attacks to get in touch. We are really happy to share our experiences and our advice,” said Williams.

Additional benefits include:

- **Zero data loss:** “Data is everything. It must be protected, and Rubrik did the job.”
- **\$0 paid in ransom:** “Confident in our protection by Rubrik, we did not entertain any ransom demands, which resulted in paying \$0 in ransom.”
- **100% data recovery from ransomware within 10 days:** “The main lesson we learned is that the remediation and response to a ransomware attack of this kind needs to focus on recovery, and Rubrik’s solution in this area is second to none.”

These benefits were achieved through a number of Rubrik capabilities and services:

- **Ease of use:** “Rubrik simplified the backup and recovery process by allowing us to recover all of our data no matter where it lives. This is all done by consolidating disparate hardware and software components into a single management plane.”
- **World-class support:** “I’m thrilled to say we are now very secure against ransomware, and we attribute this not

just to the right solution at the right time, but also to the effectiveness and timeliness of the support from Rubrik engineers. Everyone stepped up to support us. The human touch coupled with the technology helped us create a winning scenario and made a huge difference to the speed and quality of recovery.”

- **Zero Trust Data Security ROI:** We made a significant investment in March 2021, and we have seen the ROI on that investment already.”
- **Reduced technology footprint:** “We were impressed with the appliances. Rubrik came as a unit, so we did not need separate virtual or hardware units. We went from 15 servers (11 virtual and 4 hardware) to 2 x hardware boxes. This gave us a big admin reduction and simplified our systems.”

Overall, **Colchester recommends Rubrik as a way to migrate from legacy solutions:** “Being long term Veeam customers, we needed a full review to make an informed decision. The review concluded with Rubrik being the top choice due to its overall protection and recovery from cyber breaches. Our choice to move away from Veeam and purchase Rubrik was the best decision we could have made.”

Colchester Institute is the largest vocational college serving North Essex and the surrounding areas. The Institute provides first class education, professional development and technical skills training to over 8,000 students every year. Colchester Institute is regionally recognised for its outstanding facilities, which are constantly being renewed and refreshed and aims to be a ‘Lighthouse College’ for the further education sector

Rubrik, the Zero Trust Data Security™ Company, delivers data security and operational resilience for enterprises. Rubrik’s big idea is to provide data security and data protection on a single platform, including: Zero Trust Data Protection, ransomware investigation, incident containment, sensitive data discovery, and orchestrated application recovery. This means data is ready at all times so you can recover the data you need, and avoid paying a ransom. Because when you secure your data, you secure your applications, and you secure your business. For more information please visit www.rubrik.com and follow [@rubrikinc](https://twitter.com/rubrikinc) on Twitter and [Rubrik, Inc.](https://www.linkedin.com/company/rubrik) on LinkedIn. Rubrik is a registered trademark of Rubrik, Inc. Other marks may be trademarks of their respective owners.



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