



William P. Thomas, DDS: Private Dental Practice, Bakersfield, CA

Dr. William Thomas has been practicing general dentistry in Bakersfield for over 30 years. All medical and dental practices generate a high volume of vital business data that needs to be available and protected at all times. Early in his practice, Dr. Thomas tackled the challenge of running a business strictly on paper. But he, along with others in private medical and dental practice, have found that once data is digital, it's much faster to access and easier to maintain. Dr. Thomas was an early adopter of digital medical records in the late 1990s and has been 100% digital for the past decade.

"It's amazing that storage is this easy. Every dentist should have one of these. ... The Drobo is something that I can manage myself. If the lights are green, I feel confident that my data is safe."

Challenge. Single Point of Failure

Dr. Thomas has used digital dental records for more than 10 years, and his setup has grown since he installed his first computer. He now has workstations in every operatory (an area with special equipment and facilities in his office) and has deployed digital X-rays and intra-oral photography. His environment now includes a network, access to the Internet, and seven workstations.

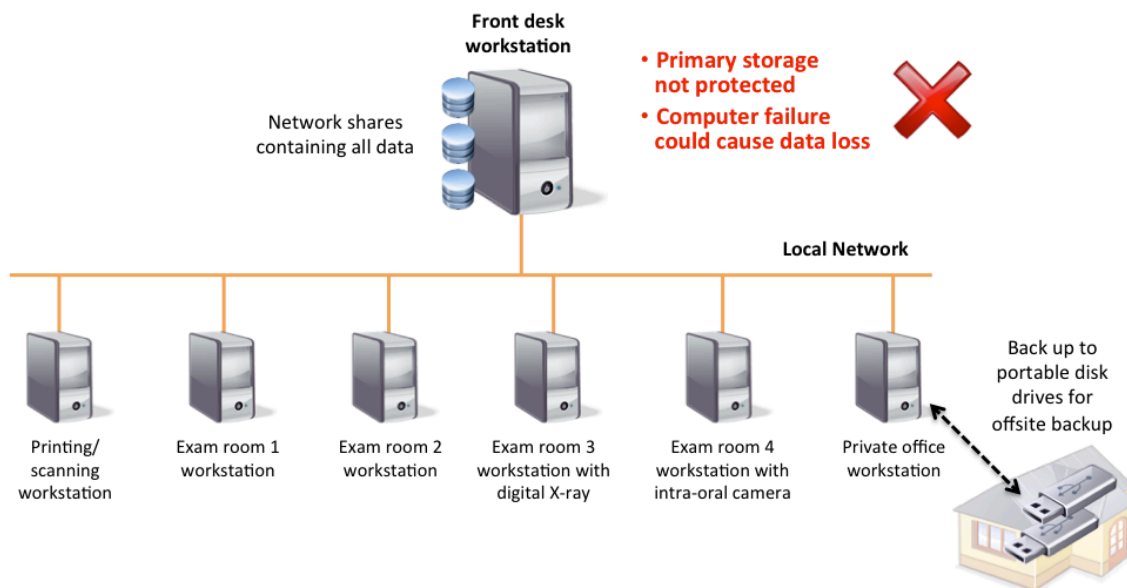


Figure 1. The workstation that held the data was the “server” for the rest of the network.

The workstation at the front desk was the one that held all of the data and the other workstations accessed that data using file sharing. This makes all systems in the network dependent on one system, generally called “single point of failure.” If that computer malfunction or fails in any way, Dr. Thomas could not access patient records, take X-rays, or process insurance claims.

And, if the hard disk drive in that system happened to fail, he would have to restore fully from backup, which took many hours or even days. "If I could not access my practice management database, I would not be able to access patient records and they would have to be rescheduled," said Dr. Thomas.

Solution. Affordable Drobo FS Provides Built-in Redundancy

Instead of the data residing on a single workstation, it now resides on a Drobo FS that is connected to the local network. The Drobo FS remains on all of the time, so if a workstation needs to access the data, it is always available. "Installing a Drobo saved me thousands of dollars compared to a full server, and it has built-in redundancy for my data."

Four 2TB hard disk drives are in the Drobo FS with Dual Disk Redundancy enabled. This provides almost 4TB of usable capacity that is protected from two simultaneous drive failures. There is also a free drive bay in case Dr. Thomas' practice needs more capacity.

Benefit. Easy-to-Manage, Protected Storage

Since Dr. Thomas is not just a dentist, he's also his own IT person. He now has centralized and protected storage that he can manage himself. "I never thought that I could install a shared storage array that protects my valuable data", said Dr. Thomas. "Now I can restart, upgrade, or install new computers without having to worry about my data."

QUICK FACTS

Challenge

- All workstations dependent on a single workstation
- No resiliency from drive failure
- No ability to seamlessly scale storage

Solution

- Drobo FS network-attached storage array
- Four 2 TB hard disk drives
- Practice management, digital X-ray, and intra-oral photography applications write directly to network shares on the Drobo

Benefits

- Simple to deploy and manage
- Centralized storage independent of any computer
- Protection for up to two simultaneous drive failures
- Easily scale available storage by just adding another drive

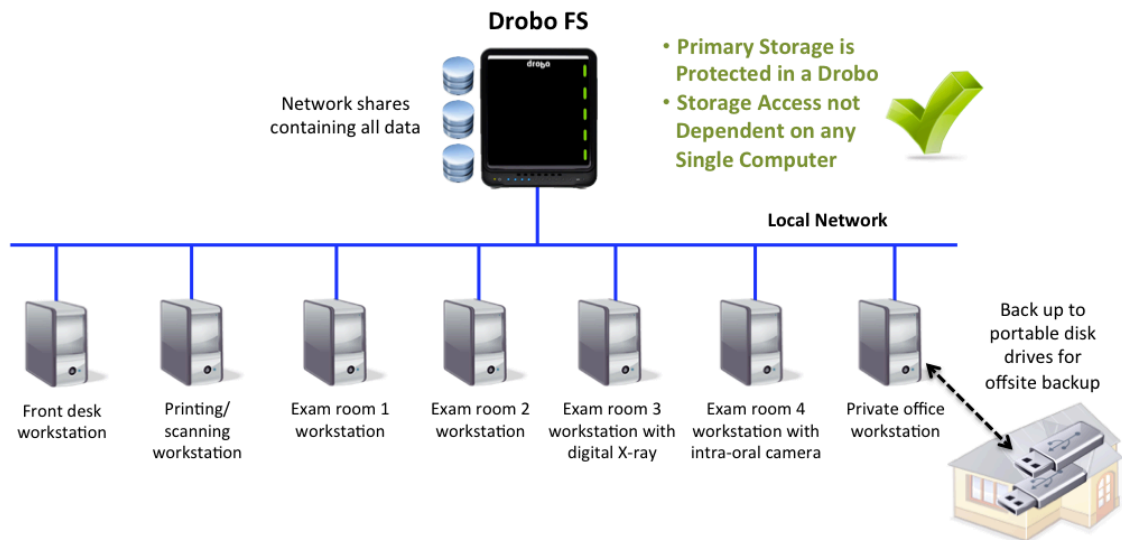


Figure 2. Drobo FS now stores and protects the data centrally and serves it up to all workstations.