Military College Chooses ExaGrid over EMC Data Domain for Scalability and Price

GEORGIA MILITARY COLLEGE
YOUR COMMUNITY JUNIOR COLLEGE
EST. 1879

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>
> **Mick Kirkwood**
> **Georgia Military College**

Key Benefits:

- ExaGrid's tight integration with Veeam delivers fastest backups and restores
- System is simple to use and manage
- Easy real-time reporting
- Flexible system will scale to keep pace with data growth

Customer Overview

Georgia Military College is a public, independent educational institution comprised of a junior college and a separate preparatory school for students in sixth through twelfth grade. The college provides its students with an associate's degree in liberal arts and prepares them for a four-year college or university. The school also provides selected college students with ROTC training and provides preparatory school students with a college preparatory curriculum that includes a military training component. Georgia Military College was founded in 1879 in Milledgeville, Georgia. The college has six campus locations and two extension centers spread throughout the state of Georgia.

Need for Replication and Deduplication Capabilities Leads to ExaGrid

Georgia Military College had been backing up all of its student and administrative data to disk but needed to upgrade its backup infrastructure to incorporate analytics, deduplication, and replication.

"We needed to step up our overall backup capabilities but the major driving factor was replication," said Mick Kirkwood, senior server engineer at Georgia Military College. "After we looked at our requirements, we decided to search for a purpose-built solution designed for backup."

Georgia Military Academy chose the ExaGrid system after also looking at an EMC Data Domain solution.

"EMC Data Domain was more expensive, but in our analysis, you don't get much more for the extra cost," said Kirkwood. "Besides the lower price tag, the one thing that really stood out was the tight integration between ExaGrid and Veeam. We're 90% virtualized and use Veeam as our backup application. The two products work extremely well together to deliver fast restores and backup speeds as well as effective data deduplication."

Georgia Military College is backing up nearly 100 virtual machines to the ExaGrid system located in its main campus in Milledgeville, Georgia, and data is replicated automatically offsite each night to a second ExaGrid system located in another campus building. "We've been very happy with ExaGrid's deduplication capabilities and the results are much better than I expected. Even though we're using Veeam's deduplication, the ExaGrid system still reduces the data by another 5:1, so we're saving even more disk space," said Kirkwood.

ExaGrid combines standard compression along with zone-level data deduplication, which stores changes from backup to backup instead of storing full file copies. This unique approach reduces the disk space required, delivering unparalleled cost savings and performance. ExaGrid delivers extremely fast backup performance because data is written directly to disk, and data deduplication is performed post process after the data is stored to reduce data. When a second site is used, the cost savings are even greater because ExaGrid's zone-level data deduplication technology moves only the changes from backup to backup, requiring minimal WAN bandwidth.

System is Easy to Use, 'Fantastic' Technical Support

Kirkwood said that since installing the ExaGrid system, backup jobs now run more consistently than before and are much more stable, saving him countless hours of

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management and administration each month. The system's management interface is also easy to use, he said.

"The management of the system is so easy -- you pretty much turn it on and forget about it. Our support engineer has been very helpful in giving me some commands and shortcuts to help get real-time information. It's great because I can get a graphical representation of how the backups are performing and then have the ability to change things if I need to," Kirkwood said.

The ExaGrid system was designed to be easy to set up and maintain, and ExaGrid's industry-leading customer support team is staffed by trained, in-house engineers who are assigned to individual accounts. The system is fully supported and was designed and manufactured for maximum uptime with redundant, hot-swappable components.

"Our ExaGrid support engineer was a big help during the installation process. He walked us through how to install the ExaGrid system and performed all the updates and patches to ensure the system was optimized and ready to go," he said. "I can't say enough about support – it's been fantastic."

ExaGrid System Passes the Durability 'Crash' Test

Kirkwood said he can personally attest to the durability and reliability of the ExaGrid system after a recent automobile accident. The ExaGrid system was being transported from one location to another when the van it was being driven in was involved in a 65 mph collision on a busy Georgia highway. No one was injured, but initially, things didn't look good for the ExaGrid.

"The ExaGrid was in the back seat of a van. When the collision happened, the machine flew off the back seat and slammed into the back of the passenger side seat, causing some of the hard drives to fall out. When we got it back to the main campus datacenter, we thought there was no way it would work again. We were pleasantly surprised when we set it up and turned it on, and it was working just fine," said Kirkwood.

Painless Scalability Provides for Increase in Data

Kirkwood said that in the near future Georgia Military College may decide to back up data from its five satellite campuses and two extension locations to the ExaGrid.

ExaGrid uses a GRID-based configuration, so when the system needs to expand, additional appliance nodes are attached to the GRID, bringing with them not only additional disk but also processing power, memory, and bandwidth. This type of configuration allows the system to maintain all the aspects of performance as the amount of data grows. In addition, as new ExaGrid appliance nodes are added to the GRID, the ExaGrid automatically load balances available capacity, maintaining a virtual pool of storage that is shared across the GRID.

"The fact that the ExaGrid system will be able to scale to handle more data is just huge for us. We have a lot of flexibility with the system, and we're confident that it will be able to handle our needs well into the future," he said.

ExaGrid and Veeam

The combination of ExaGrid's and Veeam's industry-leading virtual server data protection solutions allows customers to utilize Veeam Backup & Replication in VMware, vSphere, and Microsoft Hyper-V virtual environments on ExaGrid's disk-based backup system. This combination provides fast backups and efficient data storage as well as replication to an offsite location for disaster recovery.

The ExaGrid system fully leverages Veeam Backup & Replication's built-in backup to disk capabilities and ExaGrid's zone-level data deduplication for additional data reduction (and cost reduction) over standard disk solutions. Customers can use Veeam Backup & Replication's built-in source-side deduplication in concert with ExaGrid's disk-based backup system with zone-level deduplication to further shrink backups.

About ExaGrid Systems, Inc.

Customers worldwide depend on ExaGrid Systems to solve their backup problems–effectively and permanently. ExaGrid's disk-based, scale-out GRID architecture adjusts to increasing backup demands due to constantly growing data volumes. It is the only solution that combines compute with capacity as well as a unique landing zone to permanently shorten backup windows and eliminate expensive forklift upgrades. Learn more at **www.exagrid.com**.