

Kolcraft Simplifies Backup and Establishes Replication with ExaGrid-Veeam Solution

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Jonathan Vish
Senior Network Administrator

Key Benefits:

- ExaGrid-Veeam solution offers 'impressive' data deduplication
- Establishing replication with ExaGrid eliminates concerns of transporting drives
- 'Top-notch' ExaGrid support keeps system running smoothly

Customer Overview

Kolcraft is a third-generation, family-owned company that has been dedicated to creating innovative baby products for more than 70 years. From its start in 1946, the Chicago-based company specialized in pads for cribs, playards, and high chairs. In the 1950s, Kolcraft became one of the leading crib mattress manufacturers in the U.S. and has subsequently expanded into manufacturing a variety of products, including car seats, strollers, juvenile furniture, and more.

Establishing Offsite Replication

The IT staff at Kolcraft had been backing up data to removable hard drives using Veeam. The company had just started a contract with a colocation facility and wanted to find a new backup solution to establish offsite replication, while simplifying the backup process by eliminating the need to regularly swap out drives.

"We were looking for a backup appliance that offered data deduplication as well as replication," said Jonathan Vish, Kolcraft's senior network administrator. "Our reseller suggested ExaGrid, so we arranged for a demo to evaluate the product. It was simple and straightforward to set up ExaGrid as a backup target for Veeam. We ended up purchasing a larger ExaGrid system than the one we had evaluated, and ExaGrid support helped us tweak the settings to optimize integration with Veeam."

Kolcraft installed an ExaGrid system at its primary site and its colocation facility. Jonathan has found that the switch to ExaGrid has simplified backup management. "With our previous system, there was constant concern around transporting the drives, and whether there would be a mechanical failure which would require us to buy a new set. ExaGrid has made backup so much easier; it's one less thing I have to worry about."

The ExaGrid system is easy to install and use and works seamlessly with all of the most frequently used backup applications, so an organization can seamlessly retain its investment in existing applications and processes.



In addition, ExaGrid appliances can be used at primary and secondary sites to supplement or eliminate offsite tapes with live data repositories for disaster recovery.

Reliable Backups Stay on Schedule

Kolcraft's environment is 100% virtualized, and its data is a mix of Windows, file, print, and web servers. Jonathan backs up data in daily incrementals and weekly synthetic fulls, which are replicated offsite. Two weeks' worth of backups are kept, so that data is readily available should it need to be restored.

"ExaGrid has been providing reliable backups for years now; I hardly need to monitor the system anymore. When I get to work in the morning, the backup jobs are always finished. Our daily incrementals are quick—a couple of hours at most. We've never run into an issue where we've had overlapping backups or any spillover into the workday," said Jonathan.

ExaGrid writes backups directly to a disk landing zone, avoiding inline processing and ensuring the highest possible backup performance, which results in the shortest backup window.

EXAGRID

“Adaptive” deduplication performs deduplication and replication in parallel with backups while providing full system resources to the backups for the shortest backup window. Available system cycles are utilized to perform deduplication and offsite replication for an optimal recovery point at the disaster recovery site. Once complete, the onsite data is protected and immediately available in its full undeduplicated form for fast restores, VM Instant Recoveries, and tape copies while the offsite data is ready for disaster recovery.

ExaGrid-Veeam Combined Deduplication Keeps Storage Efficient

ExaGrid has proved to be a reliable long-term solution. The ExaGrid-Veeam combined deduplication has maximized Kolcraft’s data storage, leaving more than enough space available for the company’s two-week retention policy. “The data deduplication from our ExaGrid-Veeam solution is impressive. We’ve been using the system for about six years, and we still have plenty of space!” said Jonathan.

Veeam uses the information from VMware and Hyper-V and provides deduplication on a “per-job” basis, finding the matching areas of all the virtual disks within a backup job and using metadata to reduce the overall footprint of the backup data. Veeam also has a “dedupe friendly” compression setting which further reduces the size of the Veeam backups in a way that allows the ExaGrid system to achieve further deduplication. This approach typically achieves a 2:1 deduplication ratio.

ExaGrid is architected from the ground up to protect virtualized environments and provide deduplication as backups are taken. ExaGrid will achieve up to 5:1 additional deduplication rate. The net result is a combined Veeam and ExaGrid deduplication rate of upwards to 10:1, which greatly reduces the amount of disk storage required.

‘Top-Notch’ Customer Support Keeps System Up-to-Date

Jonathan appreciates the high level of customer support that ExaGrid provides. “The support has been top notch. Our assigned ExaGrid support engineer has been very helpful,

with everything from sending spare drives to upgrading the software on our system. He also helped us get everything under control when we had one server that was causing capacity issues. He’s very mindful of our schedules, and makes sure to start upgrades when we aren’t running backups; he makes sure it’s a seamless process.

“I really appreciate the simplicity of the platform. ExaGrid has been a ‘set it and forget it’ appliance, which is something I look for in a backup solution. It’s so easy to use, I haven’t needed to spend time managing it because we’ve rarely run into any issues. ExaGrid might not be as well-known as other products, but it’s definitely one worth considering if someone is looking for a backup appliance.”

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 level 2 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.

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. ExaGrid fully leverages Veeam’s built-in backup-to-disk capabilities, and ExaGrid’s zone-level data deduplication provides additional data 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

ExaGrid provides intelligent hyperconverged storage for backup with a unique landing zone and scale-out architecture. The landing zone enables the fastest backups, restores, and instant VM recoveries. The scale-out architecture includes full appliances in a scalable system and ensures a fixed-length backup window as data grows, eliminating expensive and disruptive forklift upgrades. Learn more at www.exagrid.com.

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