

Sporting Goods Wholesaler Meets PCI DSS Compliance Requirements with ExaGrid

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

United Sporting Companies



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Tim Wiggins
Network Engineer

Key Benefits:

- USC's corporate merger doubles data but ExaGrid keeps backup window the same
- ExaGrid provides sufficient capacity to keep mandated amount of backups onsite and meet PCI DSS compliance requirements
- Email alerts provide update on capacity consumption
- "Call home" feature enables ExaGrid engineer to provide USC with proactive support
- Restores that used to involve a time-consuming and costly tape request are now fast and hassle-free

Customer Overview

United Sporting Companies, Inc. wholesales and distributes firearms, shooting accessories, hunting supplies, marine accessories, and a variety of other outdoor sporting goods, and serves independent retail customers across the U.S. Based in Chapin, South Carolina, USC is the state's largest privately-held company.

Requirement for PCI DSS Compliance Drives Need for New Backup Solution

The IT team at United Sporting Companies (USC) was anxious to replace tape for backup. However, as a retailer that stores, processes, and transmits cardholder data, USC is required to be compliant with PCI DSS (Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard), and compliance was the driving factor for change.

"We have a lot of sales-specific data, so we back up a lot of spreadsheets, accounting files, and databases for different accounting programs, totaling roughly 15TB of data that we back up to the ExaGrid," said Tim Wiggins, network engineer at USC. "Before we purchased ExaGrid, we were backing up to tape using Arcserve, and we were taking the tapes offsite using a third party. However, we needed to have an onsite backup to be PCI compliant and now with ExaGrid, we have the retention we need to be able to keep the required data onsite."

Prior to installing ExaGrid, USC did a standard tape rotation, keeping archived tapes offsite and keeping current tapes onsite. Part of the problem, according to Wiggins, was that in order to do a restore, he would have to request tapes if the data to be restored went further back than a week. So if he needed something from two weeks ago, he'd have to wait hours – or sometimes even a full day – to get that backup returned onsite.

"The request and verification process was a hassle, and we got charged for each request. I like the fact that if I have to do a restore, I can do it in just a minute or two now," said Wiggins.

Straightforward Installation, 'Excellent' Customer Support

Once the ExaGrid system was purchased, the installation went very smoothly. "It was easy to rack mount the appliance, and as far as getting it set up, there were a couple of PDFs that walked me through the process – it was really straightforward. We've been using the ExaGrid system for about four years now.

"Whenever we have an issue, our ExaGrid support engineer is very proactive. So, for example, if we have an update available, he notifies me, or if he happens to notice that a drive is bad, he emails me – oftentimes before I've even have a chance to take a look at it. He's excellent!

"I had an issue with throughput at one point shortly after the installation, and it was this one particular job that seemed like it wasn't getting the data through the way that it needed to. When I contacted customer support, our engineer helped me with those configurations, and it had something to do with the aggregation, but he was able to troubleshoot it and come up with a solution that worked for me," Wiggins said.

Around the time that USC installed the ExaGrid system, they were in the process of merging two companies into USC. Wiggins reports that even though their data pretty much doubled, he still experienced significantly faster backup speeds on the ExaGrid system than he had previously.

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

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assigned to individual accounts. The system is fully supported, and was designed and manufactured for maximum uptime with redundant, hot-swappable components.

Email Alerts and 'Call Home' Help Alleviate Backup Headaches

Wiggins is pleased with being able to save disk space with the data reduction that he sees with the ExaGrid deduplication. "Because of the data deduplication, we haven't had the need to add a second appliance into our GRID yet. Of course, we'll eventually get to a point where we will need to add capacity, but because it's simple to do, I'm not worried," he said.

ExaGrid uses a GRID-based configuration, where each appliance contains not just disk but also processing power, memory, and bandwidth. When the system needs to expand, additional appliances are simply attached to the GRID. This type of configuration allows the system to maintain all the aspects of performance as the amount of data grows, and you only pay for what you need when you need it. In addition, as new ExaGrid appliances are added to the GRID, the ExaGrid system automatically load balances available capacity, maintaining a virtual pool of storage that is shared across the GRID.

The email alerts that ExaGrid provides enable Wiggins to easily see how much space he's consuming on the system and whether there were any errors that need his attention. "I also like the fact that the system can 'call home' in case our ExaGrid customer support engineer needs to be aware of something.

"Having the ExaGrid system has made my job a whole lot easier from a backup and restore perspective. Just having those backups onsite in addition to having them offsite alleviates a lot of my headaches as well as providing a solution for our PCI compliance," he said.

About ExaGrid

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

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Intelligent Data Protection

ExaGrid's turnkey disk-based backup system combines enterprise SATA/SAS drives with zone-level data deduplication, delivering a disk-based solution that is far more cost effective than simply backing up to straight disk. ExaGrid's patented zone-level deduplication reduces the disk space needed by a range of 10:1 to 50:1 by storing only the unique bytes across backups instead of redundant data. Adaptive deduplication performs deduplication and replication in parallel with backups while providing full system resources to the backups for the fastest backups and, therefore, the shortest backup window. As data grows, only ExaGrid avoids expanding backup windows by adding full appliances in a GRID. ExaGrid's unique landing zone keeps a full copy of the most recent backup on disk, delivering the fastest restores, VM boots in seconds to minutes, "Instant DR," and fast tape copy. Over time, ExaGrid saves up to 50% in total system costs compared to competitive solutions by avoiding costly "forklift" upgrades.

ExaGrid and Arcserve Backup

Arcserve Backup delivers reliable, enterprise-class data protection across multiple hardware and software platforms. Its proven technology — unified by a single, easy-to-use interface — enables multi-tiered protection driven by business goals and policies.

Organizations using popular backup applications can look to ExaGrid as an alternative to tape for nightly backups. ExaGrid works with existing backup applications to provide faster and more reliable backups and restores.