Bethune-Cookman University Eliminates Tape, Gains Faster Backups with ExaGrid

> "We looked at several different approaches and decided on the ExaGrid system. We were impressed with its data deduplication technology and we liked the fact that it was a simple, straightforward solution. It was also far more cost-effective than the other systems we looked at."
>
> **Hussam Reziqa**
> **Network Administrator**
> **Bethune-Cookman University**

Customer Overview

Bethune-Cookman University is an institution filled with rich history and beloved traditions, and a strong commitment to academic excellence and community service. From its beginnings as a school for young African-American girls to its status as a University, with seven academic schools offering 35 undergraduate degree programs and a master's degree in transformative leadership, B-CU has educated generations of lifelong learners and community leaders. Located in Daytona Beach, B-CU is one of three private historically black colleges in the state of Florida. The institution boasts a diverse and international faculty and student body of more than 3,600.

Failing Tape Library, High Tape Costs

According to Network Administrators John Dinardo and Hussam Reziqa, Bethune-Cookman University had been using a robotic tape library with LTO2 tapes to back up and protect its data but as its data set grew, backups had become slow and unreliable and annual tape costs were high.

"We keep two years of retention and had to dedicate several full-sized racks just to hold all the tapes. We kept buying and buying tapes and the cost was astronomical," said Dinardo. Finally, the tape library started to fail and our backup jobs weren't finishing so we decided to look for a new solution."

ExaGrid Speeds Backups and Restores

After briefly considering another robotic tape library, B-CU's IT staff narrowed down the search to disk-based backup solutions from Dell, ExaGrid and EMC Data Domain.

"We looked at several different approaches and decided on the ExaGrid system. We were impressed with its data deduplication technology and we liked the fact that it was a simple, straightforward solution," said Reziqa. "It was also far more cost-effective than the other systems we looked at."

The ExaGrid system works along with B-CU's existing backup application, Symantec Backup Exec, to protect a wide range of data including Exchange and SQL databases, file data and its Laserfiche document imaging system.

Dinardo said that since installing the ExaGrid system, B-CU's backup times have been reduced by about a third and restores are significantly faster and easier.

"Our backup jobs now run without fail each and every night and they're approximately three times as fast as they were with tape," he said. "Restores are also extremely fast because we're accessing the data directly from disk and we don't have to hunt down tapes and feed them into the tape library."

Nearly 57:1 Data Deduplication

B-CU is receiving data deduplication ratios of 56.82:1, which maximizes disk space and retention.

"The ExaGrid's data deduplication technology is simply amazing. We perform full backups every night and it's been no problem with the ExaGrid system. We've put 200,000 GB of data on the system and it's taking up only 3.5 GB of space," Reziqa said. "It's wonderful to have the ability to throw as much data at the system and have it digest it without a problem."

The ExaGrid system stores changes from backup to backup instead of storing full file copies. This unique approach reduces

the disk space required by a range of 10:1 to 50:1 or more, 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 changes, requiring minimal WAN bandwidth.

Fast Setup, Responsive Customer Support

Dinardo and Reziqa installed the system themselves and then called into ExaGrid's customer support center to finish the setup.

"Installation was really easy. I just racked the unit and contacted our ExaGrid support engineer. He setup a WebEx session and finished configuring the system and we were up and running in no time at all," said Dinardo.

Reziqa added, "We've been extremely pleased with the high level of support we receive from our ExaGrid engineer. He really knows his way around the system and he is very, very responsive when we call in. It's enterprise-level customer support."

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

Scalable to Meet Increased Demands, Flexibility to Add Second System for Data Replication

The ExaGrid system can easily be expanded to accommodate more data. ExaGrid's GRID computing software makes the system highly scalable, and when plugged into a switch, different sized configurations can be mixed and matched into a single GRID system with capacities of up to a 130TB full backup plus retention. Once virtualized, they appear as a single system to the backup server, and load balancing of all data across servers is automatic.

"The ExaGrid gives us a lot of flexibility. We can easily add additional capacity to handle more data and we can also choose to add a second system for data replication at any time," said Dinardo.

Dinardo noted that the university's IT staff has been able to reduce the amount of time spent on backups each day now that tape has been eliminated.

"Implementing the ExaGrid system has freed up a lot of staff time because we don't have to worry about changing out tapes, labeling them, and fighting with the tape library to get it working. Our backups now run much, much faster thanks to the ExaGrid system and it runs flawlessly every night," he said. "The ExaGrid system is one of the few products we've worked with that exceeds expectations."

ExaGrid and Symantec Backup Exec

Symantec Backup Exec provides cost-effective, high performance and certified disk-to-disk-to-tape backup and recovery – including continuous data protection for Microsoft Exchange, SQL, file servers and workstations. High performance agents and options provide fast, flexible, granular protection and scalable management of local and remote server backups.

Intelligent Data Protection

ExaGrid is a cost-effective, scalable disk-based backup solution that replaces tape in your nightly backup process, enabling faster and more reliable backups at a price comparable to a new tape library. ExaGrid offers the only disk backup appliance with data deduplication purpose - built for backup that leverages a unique architecture optimized for performance, scalability and price.

The ExaGrid system is a plug-and-play disk backup appliance that works with existing backup applications. ExaGrid's patented zone-level deduplication technology minimizes the amount of data to be stored by storing only the unique bytes across backups instead of storing the redundant data. This unique approach reduces the amount of disk space needed by a range of 10:1 to as high as 50:1 or more, delivering unparalleled performance in a cost-effective solution.

For more information about ExaGrid, please visit us at www.exagrid.com or call us at 1-800-868-6985.

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**.