

Cheshire Medical Center Uses ExaGrid to Restore Data – and FAST!

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

 Cheshire Medical Center
Dartmouth-Hitchcock

“We had a situation where a few of our larger servers had been hit with a virus, so we had to recover the data from our ExaGrid system. The data was completely restored and put into a holding location before we were even able to fix the virus itself—it’s one fast system!”

Scott Tilton
System Administrator

Key Benefits:

- Fast recovery in the event of a data loss or corruption event
- Built-in security on ExaGrid system prevents hacking and potential ransomware attacks on backup data
- Backup windows are shorter than when using tape, resolving prior spillover
- Scalability ‘works beautifully’ and keeps up with data growth

Customer Overview

For 125 years, Cheshire Medical Center has been caring for the health and wellness of the local community. An affiliate of the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Health system, the New Hampshire based nonprofit community medical center provides a continuum of care spanning primary care and specialty medicine, to surgical services and acute inpatient care.

Using ‘Antiquated’ Tape is a ‘Recipe for Disaster’

Cheshire Medical Center had been backing up its data to a virtual tape library (VTL) using Veritas Backup Exec. Using tape took up quite a bit of staff time, and it even required the medical center to hire on-call staff on weekends to swap out tapes to keep backups running smoothly. Scott Tilton, the system administrator, was glad that Cheshire Medical Center replaced the VTL with an ExaGrid system. “Tapes are somewhat antiquated, even though using them is common for certain areas of the industry. The manual labor and intervention always spelled a recipe for disaster. When we needed to restore data from tape, it took much longer because we would need to locate the tape, and then actually locate the data on the tape to restore it.”

After installing an ExaGrid system, Cheshire Medical Center also installed Veeam for its virtual infrastructure, keeping Backup Exec for its physical servers. The medical center’s environment is 90% virtualized, and Tilton appreciates that ExaGrid works with both of its backup applications. 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.

Backup Window ‘Spillover’ Is a Thing of the Past

Tilton backs up Cheshire Medical Center’s data in daily incrementals and weekly fulls. The data consists of medical files on over 300 servers, as well as SQL databases. He has



found backups to be reliable using ExaGrid, and he no longer has to worry about backups spilling into daytime hours or how best to stagger backup jobs to alleviate spillover, as in the past. “Most of our backups start at the exact same time, and all of them are finished before we get to the office each morning—well before then, actually. Backup windows are something we don’t need to worry about anymore. Most of our backups start at 9:00 p.m. and even the weekly full backups are finished by 5:00 a.m.”

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. “Adaptive” deduplication performs deduplication and replication in parallel with backups while providing full system resources to the backups for the shortest backup window.

Quick Data Recovery after Virus Hits

Tilton feels lucky that he has not had to restore data very often, but has found that ExaGrid provides quick and easy data recovery when necessary. On one occasion, he needed to recover data that had been corrupted by a virus.

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“A couple of our larger servers had been hit with a virus, so we had to recover the data from our ExaGrid system. The data was completely restored and quickly put into a holding location before we were even able to fix the virus itself. As soon as we had the virus cleared, we were able to move the restored data to the correct location, which was a huge time saver. In the past, we would have spent all night restoring data, but thanks to ExaGrid, that wasn’t necessary—it’s one fast system!

“These days, with all of the virus attacks, there is so much to worry about—some hospitals have even had to pay a ransom to get their data back! Fortunately, that’s not something I’ve had to lose sleep over. ExaGrid’s built-in security features limit access to that share to only the device that’s backing up to it. Infections tend to be spread from workstations or PCs, but because ExaGrid only allows for very specific pre-defined connections, viruses can’t spread into the backup system,” said Tilton.

Scalability Keeps Pace with Data Growth

As the medical center’s data has grown, it has scaled its system. Tilton is of the opinion that ExaGrid’s scalability is one of its best features. “When we do run low on space, we can just keep adding appliances to the system and don’t have to worry about replacing the entire solution. The scalability works beautifully. It’s a very simple process to add more appliances, and ExaGrid’s customer support helps to configure the new appliances for the existing system.”

All of ExaGrid’s appliances contain not just disk but also processing power, memory, and bandwidth. When the system needs to expand, additional appliances are simply attached to the existing system. This type of configuration allows the system to maintain all the aspects of performance as the amount of data grows, with customers paying for what they need when they need it. In addition, as new ExaGrid appliances are added to the existing system, ExaGrid automatically load balances available capacity, maintaining a virtual pool of storage that is shared across the system.

Tilton is pleased with ExaGrid’s support model and likes working with his assigned support engineer. “It’s nice to be able to work one-on-one with the same person who supports us; he knows

the environment and he’s easy to work with. We don’t have to reach out to ExaGrid support very often because it’s a rock-solid device—it’s worked flawlessly. Backups are our lifeline if something goes wrong, so it’s nice to use a solution that’s so reliable and that has such great support behind it. The few times we’ve had to work with our support engineer, it has been to upgrade the system or for some general maintenance.”

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.

ExaGrid and Veritas Backup Exec

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

Organizations using Veritas Backup Exec can look to ExaGrid as an alternative to tape for nightly backups. ExaGrid sits behind existing backup applications, such as Veritas Backup Exec, providing faster and more reliable backups and restores. In a network running Veritas Backup Exec, using ExaGrid in place of a tape backup system is as easy as pointing existing backup jobs at a NAS share on the ExaGrid system. Backup jobs are sent directly from the backup application to the ExaGrid for backup to disk.

About ExaGrid

ExaGrid provides hyper-converged secondary storage (HCSS) 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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