ExaGrid Disk-based Backup Gets High Marks from Greece Central School District

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

"Restoring a fairly large directory from the ExaGrid system takes about 90 seconds. Restoring the same directory from tape would have taken a day and a half. We've been extremely impressed with ExaGrid's restore speeds. It has made a tremendous difference in our day-to-day IT operations because we can spend more time on other duties instead of on managing backups and restores."

Rob Spencer
Network Engineer
Greece Central School District

Customer Overview

The Greece Central School District is the seventh largest school district in New York State. The District educates over 14,000 students annually in 23 different schools and employs over 2,000 faculty members.

Time Consuming Restores, Reliability Issues with Tape

The process of backing data up to tape was a challenge for the IT department at Greece Central School District, but restores were even more difficult. The District's tape library was unreliable and restoring data from tapes was time consuming, especially considering that its IT staff performs restores for students and faculty members on a daily basis.

"Tape was unreliable and it didn't meet our daily backup and restore needs. Our tape library often malfunctioned and the media itself wasn't easy to restore data from," said Rob Spencer, Network Engineer for Greece Central School District. "To restore a file, we had to find the correct tape, load it, inventory it and then merge it into our database. A restore could take up to a day and a half to complete. We often perform two or three restores a day and the restore process was incredibly time consuming."

ExaGrid's Data De-duplication Increases Retention, Provides Faster Restores

The Greece Central School District initially considered purchasing a larger tape library but decided that a disk-based system would better suit its backup and restore needs and chose ExaGrid.

"No other vendor offered advanced byte-level data de-duplication technology like ExaGrid," said Spencer. "ExaGrid's data de-duplication is very effective at reducing our data and we are currently able to keep six months of information on our system, which makes restoring older files easier."

ExaGrid's data de-duplication technology 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 de-duplication is performed post-process after the data is stored.

Because the District's IT staff had been overburdened with long restore processes, improving restore speed was the most important goal in selecting a new backup approach. Since installing the ExaGrid system, restore speeds have been reduced from days to minutes.

"Restoring a fairly large directory from the ExaGrid system takes about 90 seconds. Restoring the same directory from tape would have taken a day and a half," said Spencer. "We've been extremely impressed with ExaGrid's restore speeds. It has made a tremendous difference in our day-to-day IT operations because we can spend more time on other duties instead of on managing backups and restores."

Integration with Existing Backup Applications

The ExaGrid system is located in the District's datacenter in Greece NY and works alongside its existing backup applications, CA ARCserve™ and EMC NetWorker™. The

EXAGRID™

District's IT staff also uses its ExaGrid system to make tape copies each week and then archive the tapes offsite for disaster recovery purposes.

"One of the main problems we had with tape was its reliability. The ExaGrid system is extremely reliable and we're confident that our backups are performed correctly each and every time," said Spencer. "Also, the ExaGrid system integrated nicely with our existing backup applications. That was a big plus."

Easy Scalability to Support Future Growth

As the District's employees increase their use of technology and create more data, the ExaGrid system can easily scale to meet backup needs.

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 for up to a 60TB 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.

"As we begin new technology initiatives it's critical that we have a backup solution that can scale to meet our needs. The ExaGrid is easily expandable so that we can meet our needs now and into the future," said Spencer. "The ExaGrid system is a quantum leap above tape technology and its cost per megabyte was in line with the tape systems we looked at. The ExaGrid really has made our backup processes more reliable and efficient."

ExaGrid and EMC Networker

ExaGrid and the EMC Networker provide fast and flexible backup and recovery, with an intuitive user interface and policy-based backup engine that helps automate and simplify the entire backup and recovery process. NetWorker's powerful snapshot management provides instant data protection and rapid recovery by giving you complete control of third-party snapshot tools.

ExaGrid and CA ARCserve

CA ARCserve 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 sits behind existing backup applications to provide faster and more reliable backups and restores.

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 onsite backup to disk.

Intelligent Data Protection

ExaGrid's turnkey disk-based backup system combines high quality SATA drives with byte-level data de-duplication, delivering a disk-based solution that is more cost effective than standard SATA drives. ExaGrid's byte-level data de-duplication technology stores only the changes from backup to backup instead of storing full file copies, reducing the amount of disk space needed by a range of 10:1 to 50:1, or more, resulting in a solution that is 25 to 30% the cost of standard SATA drives.

ExaGrid is easy to install and use and works seamlessly with popular backup applications, so organizations can retain their investment in existing applications.

ExaGrid can be used at a primary site and at a second site to supplement or eliminate offsite tapes with a live data repository or for disaster recovery. When a second site is used, the cost savings are even greater because ExaGrid's byte-level data de-duplication technology moves only changes, requiring minimal WAN bandwidth.

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**.

ExaGrid Systems, Inc. | 2000 West Park Drive | Westborough, MA 01581 | 800.868.6985 | www.exagrid.com