

GuidelT Confidently Backs Up Client Data – and Its Own – with ExaGrid

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Edmund Farias
Convergence Engineer
Sr. Specialist

Key Benefits:

- Competitive pricing and scalability make ExaGrid the ideal solution for GuidelT’s clients
- Combined ExaGrid-Veeam data deduplication maximizes storage for GuidelT’s own data
- ‘Top-quality’ ExaGrid support provides assistance on entire environment, beyond hardware
- ExaGrid supports a variety of backup apps, including two used often by GuidelT’s clients: Veeam and Veritas Backup Exec

Customer Overview

GuidelT, a Perot company that launched in 2013, is a provider of technology optimization services located in Plano, Texas. Through a collaborative approach, the company helps customers align IT operations in meeting their strategic business needs, better govern and manage the cost of IT, and effectively navigate changes in technology.

GuidelT Uses ExaGrid to Back Up Client Data As Well As Its Own

GuidelT provides its clients with IT infrastructure management and data preservation services that include backup and recovery. In addition to recommending ExaGrid as a backup storage solution for its clients, the IT company also uses an ExaGrid system to back up its own data.

Five of GuidelT’s clients currently use ExaGrid to back up their data, and GuidelT staff feel confident that ExaGrid’s performance will live up to client expectations. Edmund Farias, convergence engineer senior specialist at GuidelT, offers some insight into how clients are using their ExaGrid systems: “We’re backing up over 500 virtual machines (VMs) as well as physical servers for our clients on ExaGrid systems. The majority of our clients use Veeam to back up virtual servers and Veritas Backup Exec to back up physical servers. Some of our clients have an ExaGrid system onsite that replicates to GuidelT’s data center, and some back up data directly to our data center.”

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. 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.

Using ExaGrid gives GuidelT assurance that it can meet its clients’ needs. “It helps us with our requirements as a service provider, where we’ve taken on backups and restores as our responsibility. If something happens, we need to know that we’re able to retrieve client data, and ExaGrid provides us with confidence that we’ll be able to do that,” said Farias.

ExaGrid Provides Better Value for Clients with Growing Data

Farias has found that using ExaGrid’s disk-based backup storage solution is a better value for his clients than using the cloud for backup. “For some of our clients, cloud-based backup is just not feasible due to the amount of data that they have stored. Cloud-based backup solutions charge by the amount of data stored, so clients would have to worry about the monthly price changing as user data grows. That’s the biggest difference about using an ExaGrid system; the appliance is paid for and owned, and it has been properly sized to accommodate the client. It can be scaled as necessary, and it’s a very easy system to deploy.”



ExaGrid's computing software makes the system highly scalable to accommodate data growth, and when plugged into a switch, appliances of any size or age can be mixed and matched in a single system with capacities of up to a 2PB full backup plus retention at an ingest rate of up to 432TB per hour. Once virtualized, they appear as a single system to the backup server, and load balancing of all data across servers is automatic.

Combined ExaGrid-Veeam Deduplication Maximizes Storage

In addition to storing client backup data, GuidelT also backs up its own data onto an ExaGrid system. The company's environment is entirely virtualized, using Veeam to back up its VMware. "We back up our data daily and also do weekly synthetic fulls, and some file systems are even backed up on a 4-hour incremental basis. We keep retention of 14 dailies as well as copy jobs and a quarterly backup. We're able to back up 160TB in a space of 53TB thanks to the data deduplication from ExaGrid and Veeam."

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 a 3:1 up to 5:1 additional deduplication rate. The net result is a combined Veeam and ExaGrid deduplication rate of 6:1 upwards to 10:1, which greatly reduces the amount of disk storage required.

'Top-Quality' Support

Farias appreciates ExaGrid's support model of working with an assigned engineer who knows GuidelT's environment. "One of the best aspects of working with ExaGrid is the top-quality support engineers. My ExaGrid support engineer is able to assist me with my entire environment, beyond my ExaGrid hardware. He's helped me with VMware and with Backup Exec. I've received better support from him than when I've called other vendors directly."

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.

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 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. 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.

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