



# Hamilton College Chooses ExaGrid and Veeam for Backup Efficiency

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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**Jesse Thomas**  
Network and Systems Admin

## Customer Overview

Located in New York state, Hamilton College is one of the nation's oldest and most highly regarded liberal arts colleges. It is comprised of 1,850 students from nearly all 50 states and approximately 45 countries. The College is distinguished by a rigorous open curriculum, a need-blind admission policy, a deeply committed faculty who welcome close collaboration with students, and a focus on preparing students for lives of meaning, purpose and active citizenship.

## Slow Backup Jobs, Failures, and Wasted Time Force Upgrade to ExaGrid

When Hamilton College virtualized its environment, the IT staff decided the time was right to upgrade its backup infrastructure in hopes of improving speed and eliminating tape. With its data constantly growing – upwards of 60TB – Hamilton was unable to finish nightly backup jobs, and restoring files had become quite time consuming.

Historically, Hamilton used Veritas Backup Exec in addition to a combination of a disk-based virtualized tape library and a traditional LTO tape library. As the number of servers along with the amount of data grew, the number of problems also increased. "It got to the point where we spent the majority of our week just monitoring the jobs, looking for failures and errors, and then manually re-running things to make sure that we were getting reliable backups. It seemed as though the on-call person, who was responsible for watching the backups, would often spend the majority of their time focused just on that activity," said Jesse Thomas, Network and Systems Administrator for Hamilton College.

Hamilton purchased a two-site ExaGrid solution and installed systems in its main datacenter as well as offsite for disaster recovery. "I think the biggest thing that we've noticed here is the massive time savings. There's an ever-increasing demand on our time, and being able to get back the time spent managing and monitoring backups is huge – the difference is dramatic and remarkable! Now, we have more time to invest elsewhere in moving the organization forward," said Thomas.



Thomas noted that now that all data goes through ExaGrid for backup storage, there are rarely any failures, and his team will take a quick glance at the dashboard daily to be proactive.

## 17:1 Dedupe Ratio and 100% Time Savings

"We have a self-imposed six-month retention period for most of our data. One thing that was different with tape was that in order to achieve that retention period, we would have to cycle tapes out of our library weekly and move them into different offsite storage – still on-campus but in a different building. With the ExaGrid system, we now have a replication unit – and since that is managed by the software automatically, it's a 100% time savings," said Thomas.

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

### Key Benefits:

- 17:1 dedupe ratio uses fraction of disk capacity
- 'Top-notch' customer support
- Works seamlessly with both Veeam and Backup Exec
- DR site provides much needed reliability
- Massive time savings, 100% when using ExaGrid for replication



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 unduplicated form for fast restores, VM Instant Recoveries, and tape copies while the offsite data is ready for disaster recovery.

Hamilton College is currently getting data deduplication ratios as high as 17:1, which helps to maximize the amount of data the college can store on the system. The technology also helps to make transmission between sites more efficient. "We're using a fraction of the amount of disk capacity," said Thomas.

## Flexibility with Popular Backup Apps Offers Modern Approach

Hamilton College continues to use Veritas Backup Exec for its physical servers, but the college has become 90+% virtualized, taking advantage of Veeam for maximum backup performance. Hamilton installed an ExaGrid system in its main datacenter and uses the system in conjunction with Backup Exec for its physical servers and Veeam Backup & Replication for virtual machines.

"We're very happy with Veeam and how well it works together with ExaGrid. We've learned that the combination of ExaGrid and Veeam delivers the fast restores, data deduplication, and backup reliability we were looking for. What makes a big difference for us is having a system that's architected for modern backups," said Thomas.

## Unique Customer Support Model That Delivers

"We like having an assigned ExaGrid customer support engineer so that we don't have to go through the often laborious process of opening a case on the web or making a phone call and then waiting to be assigned to someone. Having a support engineer assigned to our account means they know our site well, they've gained experience with it, and they're very quickly able to get right to the root of the question and resolve it," said Thomas.

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.

## ExaGrid Architecture Provides Superior Scalability

ExaGrid's scalable architecture will enable Hamilton College to continue to expand its two-site solution. "Reliability is another key difference with ExaGrid. Backup is not something we need to spend a lot of time on anymore. ExaGrid just does its job in

## About ExaGrid

ExaGrid provides intelligent hyperconverged storage 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](http://www.exagrid.com).

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the background as it's supposed to. It really works flawlessly for the most part. Plus, it's scalable and will easily grow with us over time," said Thomas.

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.

## 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. ExaGrid fully leverages Veeam's built-in backup-to-disk capabilities, and ExaGrid's adaptive data deduplication provides additional data 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 Adaptive 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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