Idaho Falls School District #91 Relies on ExaGrid for Fast Backups

IDAHO FALLS
SCHOOL DISTRICT 91

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Eric Bodily
Systems Administrator
Idaho Falls School District #91

Customer Overview

Idaho Falls School District #91 is located in Idaho Falls, Idaho, a community with a population of 55,000. Approximately 600 teachers educate 10,400 students in two high schools, three junior high schools, twelve elementary schools, and one alternative school.

Data Growth Led to Long Backup Times

Idaho Falls District #91 has seen its data grow quickly over the past several years and is expecting it to grow even faster in the near future when it implements a portfolio program that will enable students to retain their work electronically throughout most of their school career. To meet current and future data protection requirements, the district decided to upgrade its backup technology from tape to disk.

"Our data use is exploding, and our backup requirements are growing by the day," said Eric Bodily, systems administrator for the Idaho Falls School District #91. "We had been backing up our data to tape but as our data grew our backup times kept getting longer and longer. We knew that if we didn't address the situation we wouldn't be prepared as we began to run into performance problems."

Cost-effective ExaGrid System Provides Data Deduplication, Cuts Backup Times in Half

The district chose an ExaGrid disk-based backup system after comparing it against a competing solution. The ExaGrid system was installed in the district's main datacenter and works along with its existing backup application, Symantec's Backup Exec.

"The ExaGrid system was more cost-effective than the competing product, and we liked ExaGrid's post process approach to data deduplication," said Bodily. "We believed that the ExaGrid would provide better performance because it compresses the data after it lands on the disk, and in fact, we've been extremely pleased with the speed of our backups."

The district currently backs up approximately 40 servers to the ExaGrid system, and has see data deduplication rates as high as 30:1 for its SQL data. Currently, the district is able to keep two weeks of daily backups and six months of weekly backups on the system.

ExaGrid combines last backup compression along with data deduplication, which 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. ExaGrid is cost effective when a two-site system is used because its data deduplication technology moves only changes between sites, minimizing the amount of bandwidth needed.

Bodily said the district has been able to cut its backup times in half since installing the ExaGrid system.

"Our backups are now completed well within our backup window," said Bodily. "We're also spending far less time managing and administering tape and the restore process is more effi cient. We no longer have to order tapes from storage, install them, catalog them and perform the restore. With the ExaGrid, we can restore data with just a few clicks. The whole process is lightening fast."

EXAGRID™

GRID Architecture Provides Smooth Scalability

Bodily said that scalability was a critical factor in the selection of the ExaGrid system, and the district is currently in the process of expanding the system to back up more data.

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The ExaGrid system can easily be scaled to meet increased demand. ExaGrid's GRID computing software makes the system highly scalable, and when plugged into a switch, different sized confi gurations can be mixed and matched into a single GRID system with capacities of up to a 60TB full backup plus retention. Once virtualized, they appear as a single system to the The system can be easily expanded to handle more data as the organization's backup demands increase. 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 100TB 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.

Easy Setup and Management, Superior Customer Support

ExaGrid comes packaged as a turnkey appliance and was designed to be easy to deploy and manage and to deliver maximum uptime with redundant, hot-swappable components. All components are fully supported by ExaGrid's trained, inhouse engineers dedicated to individual accounts.

"We were able to install the ExaGrid system ourselves and then ExaGrid's customer support team set up a WebEx session to help us confi gure it. It was simple and straightforward to get the ExaGrid up and running and the management interface is intuitive," said Bodily. "We've had a very good experience with ExaGrid's customer support. They're easy to reach and knowledgeable, and they are very good at resolving issues quickly."

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.

Organizations using Symantec Backup Exec can look to ExaGrid as an alternative to tape for nightly backups. ExaGrid sits behind existing backup applications, such as Symantec Backup Exec, providing faster and more reliable backups and restores. In a network running Symantec 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 onsite backup to disk.

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**.