

Lee County Tax Collector Speeds Backups, Improves Disaster Recovery Plan and Eliminates Tape with ExaGrid

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Eddie Wilson
Systems Engineer
Lee County Tax
Collector's Office

Customer Overview

The Lee County Tax Collector's Office is authorized by Florida's Constitution as a separate entity from other county departments and agencies. The Tax Collector serves as an agent for various state and local government agencies for the collection and distribution of revenues. It is the responsibility of the Tax Collector to invest these revenues and funds, pending their timely distribution, to various state and local agencies, and taxing authorities. The county makes up the entirety of the Cape Coral/Fort Meyers, Florida area and is the most populous county in Southwest Florida with 623,725 residents.

Long Backup Times, Frustration with Tape

The IT staff at the Lee County Tax Collector's Office was tired of dealing with long backup times and cumbersome tape. When the Office's tape backup system neared its end-of-life, the staff decided to reevaluate its backup requirements and began to search for alternatives to tape.

"We looked carefully at our backup requirements and decided to look for a disk-based solution that would let us reduce or eliminate tape, improve our backup windows, and enable us to replicate data to a second system for disaster recovery," said Eddie Wilson, systems engineer at the Lee County Tax Collector's Office.

Two-Site ExaGrid System Speeds Backups, Improves Disaster Recovery Plan

After looking at solutions from Data Domain, EMC and Quantum, the Lee County Tax Collector's Office chose a two-site disk-based backup system with data deduplication from ExaGrid. The ExaGrid systems are located in the Office's main data center in Fort Meyers and in its disaster recovery site in Estero. The systems are connected via 100Mb fiber and work in conjunction with the Office's existing backup applications, Symantec Backup Exec and Vizioncore vRanger Pro.

"The ExaGrid system was the clear winner. The price and performance were good. It was easy to implement and it fit right into our existing environment. We were also able to deploy a two-site system that enables us to replicate data to our disaster recovery site," said Wilson. "We did a lot of research into both post-process and in-line data deduplication technologies. We decided that ExaGrid's post-process approach would give us the fastest backups because the deduplication is performed after the backup lands on the system. ExaGrid's data deduplication technology also helps us maximize disk space. We've seen dedupe ratios as high as 14:1."

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. When a second site is used, the cost savings are even greater because ExaGrid's byte-level data deduplication technology moves only changes, requiring minimal WAN bandwidth.

Prior to installing the ExaGrid system, nightly backups took a total of 13 hours,

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including tape copy time. Actual backups and replication to the second ExaGrid system now take only five hours. The Office had been using six tapes per day and nine tapes per weekend to back up data, and staff members used to transport tapes back and forth for storage.

“Our backup times are significantly faster, and I love the fact that our data is automatically replicated in case we need it for recovery purposes,” said Ron Joray, network systems analyst. “We used to spend hours transporting tapes around ourselves. Now, we have a completely tapeless operation and we’re saving a small fortune on tapes.”

Easy Setup and Administration, Superior Customer Support

The ExaGrid system works with popular backup applications and was designed to be easy to install and maintain. ExaGrid’s industry-leading customer support team is staffed by trained, in-house engineers who are dedicated to individual accounts. The system is fully supported and was designed and manufactured for maximum uptime with redundant, hot-swappable components.

“The ExaGrid system was very easy to set up. I think we spent 10 to 15 minutes on the phone with our support engineer and we had the system up and running in no time at all,” said Joray. “We’ve had a very good experience with ExaGrid’s customer support. We have our support engineer’s direct number and can call or email him any time we have a question or issue.”

Scalability to Grow

“Scalability was an important factor in choosing the ExaGrid system. We’re constantly generating more and more data and adding additional servers. We purchased the ExaGrid EX5000 and we currently have plenty of room, but when we need to expand we can simply add a new unit and gain more capacity,” said Wilson.

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.

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.

“The ExaGrid system has made our backups and restores faster and has enabled us to improve our disaster recovery plan. And, the fact that we no longer have to deal with tape is simply tremendous,” said Wilson. “It saves us lots of time and makes our backup operations far more efficient.”

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.

ExaGrid and Vizioncore vRanger Pro

Vizioncore vRanger Pro is the recognized industry-standard backup and restore solution for virtualized environments. Administrators can schedule regular image-level backups of virtual or physical machines – while the machine is still running. Images can be stored either locally in the SAN or sent as compressed files over a WAN to remote locations to support disaster recovery strategies.

Intelligent Data Protection

ExaGrid’s turnkey disk-based backup system combines high quality SATA drives with byte-level data deduplication, delivering a disk-based solution that is more cost effective than standard SATA drives. ExaGrid’s byte-level data deduplication technology stores only the changes from backup to backup instead of storing full file copies, reducing the amount of disk 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. The ExaGrid system is easy to install and use and works seamlessly with popular backup applications, so organizations can retain their investment in existing applications and processes. ExaGrid servers can be used at primary and secondary sites to supplement or eliminate offsite tapes with live data repositories for disaster recovery.

For more information about ExaGrid, please visit us at www.exagrid.com or call us at 1-800-868-6985.