Leith Management Cuts Backup Times in Half with ExaGrid

LEITH

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>
> **Gene Barden**
> **Sr. Network and**
> **Systems Specialist**
> **Leith Management Group**

Key Benefits:

- Data replication to a second site provides disaster recovery
- Backups are now well within backup window
- Backups are 'hands-off' and require minimal staff time
- 34:1 deduplication on SQL backups

Customer Overview

Leith is one of the largest sources for new and pre-owned vehicles in North Carolina, and operates 31 auto dealerships, representing 28 new vehicle manufacturers. Leith locations also offer parts and service from factory-certified technicians to repair all new and used makes and models.

Unreliable NAS Solution Led to Problematic Backup

Leith Management Group had been backing up its data to a NAS device, but it wasn't an enterprise-class product, and it was a struggle just to keep it up and running each day, according to Gene Barden, senior network and systems specialist at Leith. So in order to boost reliability and improve backup times, Leith began looking for a more robust backup solution.

"When we were backing up to the NAS, I'd come in each morning to find that our nightly backup jobs had either failed or were still running," said Barden. "We finally decided the time was right to look for an enterprise-class solution capable of reducing our backup times and the amount of user intervention required to get good, consistent backups. We also wanted to improve disaster recovery."

Two-Site ExaGrid System Delivers Seamless Disaster Recovery, Backup Times Cut in Half

Barden said that after looking at several different solutions, the company narrowed down the field to systems from EMC Data Domain and ExaGrid.

"We compared solutions from Data Domain and ExaGrid and ultimately chose the ExaGrid based on its lower cost and its

ability to replicate data between sites," he said. "The replication feature is wonderful. We purchased a two-site system for both primary backup and disaster recovery. The systems work with our existing backup application, Symantec Backup Exec, and data is replicated automatically between the two systems each night."

Prior to installing the ExaGrid system, long backups were a particular concern for Barden. Backups of the company's SQL data were especially difficult because the jobs were taking over 12 hours. Since installing the ExaGrid system, SQL backup times have been cut in half.

"Our backups are so much faster with the ExaGrid system, and all our jobs are completed well within our backup window. I used to have to troubleshoot backups first thing in the morning. Now, I come in and all the jobs have been completed, and the data has been replicated offsite," said Barden.

Data Deduplication Reduces SQL Data 34:1

ExaGrid's post-process data deduplication technology speeds backup times by sending backup data to a landing zone before the deduplication process begins.

"ExaGrid's data deduplication method is extremely effective at reducing our data, and it makes our backups run very fast," said Barden. "We've been particularly impressed

EXAGRID™

with the way it handles our SQL backups. We're currently seeing a 34:1 deduplication ratio for SQL."

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 zone-level data deduplication technology moves only changes, requiring minimal WAN bandwidth.

Easy to Manage, Easy to Use

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 dedicated to individual accounts. The system is fully supported and was designed and manufactured for maximum uptime with redundant, hot-swappable components.

Reduced Management Time, Reliable Customer Support

Barden said that prior to installing the ExaGrid system, it took several hours a day to manage and administer backups to disk, but it takes him far less time with the ExaGrid system.

"I can't even estimate how much time we used to spend each day dealing with our old backup solution; it was unbearable," said Barden. "We spend almost no time at all managing the ExaGrid. It's totally hands-off, and I love the fact that our data is automatically replicated offsite," he said. "Restores are extremely fast too. I used to cringe when I had to perform a restore, but now it's no big deal. I've had to restore a couple of SQL databases, and the whole process was fast and easy."

"I worked with ExaGrid's support staff to set the system up, and it was extremely quick and easy to do. Customer support has been terrific. Every time I have a question or an issue, they're easy to reach and knowledgeable," said Barden.

GRID Architecture Ensures Scalability

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 130TB 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.

"The ExaGrid system is intuitive and straightforward to use. We haven't had to scale our ExaGrid up yet, but I'm sure that when the time comes, it will be easy to do," said Barden. "I have a high level of confidence in the ExaGrid system. It's taken all the worry out of our backups and has significantly reduced the amount of time I spend on them each day."

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.

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