

Massachusetts Division of Health Care Finance and Policy Speeds Backups and Restores with Cost-effective ExaGrid System

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Paul Lantieri
Network Operations Manager
Massachusetts Division of
Health Care Finance and Policy

Customer Overview

The Massachusetts Division of Health Care Finance and Policy is chartered with improving health care and health care financing by providing information, developing policies, and promoting efficiencies that benefit the people of Massachusetts.

Long Backups, Difficult Restores

As Network Operations Manager for the Massachusetts Division of Health Care Finance and Policy, Paul Lantieri is responsible for ensuring that the Division's data is properly protected and that its network runs as smoothly as possible. However, long backup times, difficult restore processes and daily tape management issues had been plaguing the Division for some time. Each week, full backups ran from Friday night to Tuesday or Wednesday mornings, and nightly incremental backups ran from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 a.m. the following day.

In an effort to reduce backup times the Division began backing up its data to disk and then to tape, but without data deduplication technology, Lantieri and his staff found themselves constantly juggling backup jobs to meet the Division's retention goals. In addition, restoring data was difficult and time consuming.

"We were using up lots and lots of disk space for backups and it was extremely cumbersome. It took a lot of planning and workarounds to try to make sure that we weren't running terabytes of data across the LAN during production hours. And to be honest, it just didn't make sense financially," said Lantieri. "Our restores had also become onerous. We needed to find a solution that would alleviate our long backups and make restoring data easier."

ExaGrid System Provides Relief for Less than Half the Cost, Saves on Tape and Transportation Costs

Lantieri and his staff decided to look for a new solution and chose ExaGrid's disk-based backup system. The ExaGrid system is located in the Division's downtown Boston datacenter and works alongside its backup application, Symantec Backup Exec™.

"The ExaGrid system was less than half the cost of the other system we looked at and its built-in data deduplication technology enabled us to purchase a much smaller system than we otherwise would have," said Lantieri.

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.

The Division is currently receives an overall data deduplication rate of 15:1, with a 30:1 ratio for its SQL data.

Prior to installing the ExaGrid system, the Division had been spending approximately

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\$14,000 per year in tape costs. Since installing the ExaGrid system, the Division has been able to nearly eliminate its reliance on tape, resulting in significant cost savings in both tape and tape transportation costs. The ExaGrid system is backed up to tape periodically and the tapes are sent offsite in case the data is needed for disaster recovery purposes.

"In the future, we may consider adding a second ExaGrid system for disaster recovery so that we can further reduce or even eliminate our reliance on tape," said Lantieri.

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

Full Backups Reduced by Three Days, Fast Restores for Even the Largest Databases

With the ExaGrid system, the Division is now able to back up all of its data within its backup window, even for its largest backup jobs. For example, the Division's primary file server contains 3 TB of file data and over five million files, and backups used to take from Friday night until Wednesday morning. Now, backups of the system are now completed by Sunday night

Lantieri reports that restores are also significantly faster with the ExaGrid system.

"We recently had to restore two SQL databases containing 30 GB and 10 GB of data and the process was completed within 30 minutes. It would have taken forever with tape but it was just a point and click operation with the ExaGrid system," said Lantieri.

Easy to Install and Maintain, Superior Customer Support

The ExaGrid system was designed to be easy to install and to maintain, and each customer is assigned a trained, in-house ExaGrid customer support engineer. The ExaGrid system is fully supported and was designed and manufactured for maximum uptime with redundant, hot-swappable components.

"One of the things we were very impressed with was how easy the ExaGrid system was to install. We simply pulled

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.

it out of the box, put it in the rack, turned it on, connected the network cables and it was up and running," said Lantieri. "ExaGrid's customer support engineer stepped us through the rest of the way and helped us optimize the system for our environment. The support we have received from ExaGrid has been fantastic."

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'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 sites 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.