

ExaGrid System Reduces School District's Backup Window by 63%

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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John Renahan
Edutech

Key Benefits:

- Restores that used to be cumbersome and time consuming are now done quickly with a few keystrokes
- The system fit seamlessly into the district's infrastructure
- Backup times reduced from 48 hours to 18

Customer Overview

The Phelps-Clifton Springs Central School District serves nearly 2,000 students in Ontario County, New York.

Need to Upgrade Tape Library, Reduce Time Spent on Restores

John Renahan supports the Phelps-Clifton Springs (Midlakes) Central School District as part of his role at Edutech, an organization that provides administrative and instructional technology services to the state of New York's 700 school districts.

According to Renahan, the school district decided to look for a new backup solution when its tape library began running out of capacity.

"The district needed to upgrade its tape library and looked at a whole host of options, from higher capacity libraries to disk-to-disk solutions," he said. "Our organization has considerable experience with the ExaGrid system. We recommended it because we felt that it would work well with the district's existing infrastructure to make restores faster and reduce the amount of time and resources spent managing tape."

ExaGrid Works with Existing Backup Application, Delivers Faster Backups and Restores

The district installed the ExaGrid system in its main datacenter and backs up the system approximately once a month to its old tape library using its existing backup application, Symantec Backup Exec.

"Prior to installing the ExaGrid, restores were a significant pain point for the district because tapes would have to be recalled from storage before the restore process could

be initiated. Now, restores can be completed easily with just a few keystrokes," Renahan said. "The ExaGrid system fit right into the district's infrastructure and immediately improved retention, restore times, and backup speeds."

Full Backup Times Reduced from 48 to 18 Hours, Dedupe Ratios as High as 14:1

Renahan said that since installing the ExaGrid system, full backup times have been reduced from 48 hours to 18 hours, and ExaGrid's post-process data deduplication helps to speed backup times while maximizing the amount of data retained on the system.

"We're currently seeing deduplication ratios as high as 14:1 for SQL data, which really helps improve retention," he said. "And backup jobs run quickly because the dedupe process begins after the backup hits the system's landing zone."

ExaGrid combines standard compression along with zone-level data deduplication, which stores changes from backup to backup instead of storing full file copies. 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 the changes from backup to backup, requiring minimal WAN bandwidth.

Easy Management and Administration Save Time

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

"I used to spend a considerable amount of time troubleshooting backups for the district, but I spend hardly any time at all now. We don't have the failures we used to have, and we save a lot of time because we don't need to deal with restoring data from tapes anymore," he said. "The system was easy to install, and it's very hands-off. I look at the reports occasionally, but there's not a lot to do in terms of management – it just runs."

GRID Architecture Designed for Easy Expansion

The district purchased the ExaGrid system with plenty of room to accommodate data growth, but if backup requirements do increase, the ExaGrid system can easily scale to meet additional demands.

ExaGrid uses a GRID-based configuration, so when the system needs to expand, additional appliance nodes are attached to the GRID, bringing with them not only additional disk but also processing power, memory, and bandwidth. This type of configuration allows the system to maintain all the aspects of performance as the amount of data grows. In addition, as new ExaGrid appliances are added to the GRID, the system automatically load balances available capacity, maintaining a virtual pool of storage that is shared across the GRID.

"The ExaGrid system was a solid choice for the district. It slid into the existing infrastructure and delivered the faster restores and additional capacity the staff was looking for. It also

reduced the time and stress involved with dealing with tape," said Renahan.

ExaGrid and Symantec Backup Exec

Symantec Backup Exec is the gold standard in Windows data recovery, providing 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. It also supports single-drive libraries, encryption, and disaster recovery. High-performance agents and options provide fast, flexible, granular protection and recovery, 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 disk drives with zone-level data deduplication, delivering a disk-based solution that is far more cost effective than simply backing up to straight disk. ExaGrid's zone-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 backing up to straight disk. 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.

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.