

ExaGrid Delivers Stress-Free Backups at Rush Memorial Hospital

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Bobby Herron
Sr. Systems/Network Admin.
Rush Memorial Hospital

Key Benefits:

- Difference between disk-based backup and tape is 'like night and day'
- ExaGrid system 'runs quietly in the background'
- Data is easily replicated to a second site for disaster recovery
- Retention increased to six weeks
- 'World-class' ExaGrid customer support is 'by far the best support I've ever experienced'
- System was easily scaled in a matter of hours due to GRID architecture and remote configuration

Customer Overview

Rush Memorial Hospital opened in 1950 and has 52 beds, an emergency department, ancillary services, state-of-the-art imaging services, surgical suites, and an updated rehabilitation therapy area. A medical office building was added in November of 2006 to house its growing family practice, expand its cancer care services, and centralize its visiting specialty physician clinics.

Two-Site ExaGrid System Provides Backup and DR Without the Burden of Tape

When Bobby Herron joined the IT staff at Rush Memorial Hospital 2-1/2 years ago, he imagined that he'd be facing the same backup issues he had experienced in his former job.

"I came from an organization where we were going through 50 tapes a day. It was a nightmare to manage the tape libraries, and we were constantly troubleshooting backup issues. Backups were the most dreaded part of my job," said Herron, who is now a senior systems/network administrator at the hospital. "When I started at Rush Memorial, I asked about backups and was told they had installed an ExaGrid system. I'd never heard of ExaGrid before, and I have to say that the difference between disk-based backup and tape is like night and day. I love working with the ExaGrid system – it just runs quietly in the background and does its job well. I don't have to worry about backups here."

Rush Memorial Hospital currently backs up 6TB of data each night to its two-site ExaGrid system using Acronis Backup & Recovery. The hospital's environment is nearly 100 percent virtualized, and it backs up all of its data, including patient information, medical records, scanned images of patient information, as well as financial, billing and business systems to the ExaGrid system. Data is backed up throughout the day, first to a pair of ExaGrid systems in its primary datacenter, and then it is replicated to another system located in another area of the hospital for disaster recovery.

Fast Backups and Restores, Deduplication Maximizes Retention

Herron said that backup jobs run quickly, and he spends almost no time managing backups and restores.

"Backups of individual servers take only minutes, and restores are fast," he said. "The ExaGrid system does a great job at reducing our data, and we're currently seeing deduplication ratios of 2.62:1. We're able to keep six weeks of retention on the ExaGrid system, so our backup data is always available on the ExaGrid system in the event that we need to restore information."

ExaGrid combines standard compression along with zone-level 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. With ExaGrid disk-based backup appliances, backups are written directly to a disk landing zone, avoiding inline processing, and ensuring the highest possible backup performance resulting in the shortest backup window.

Adaptive deduplication performs deduplication and replication in parallel with backups while providing full system resources to the backups for the shortest backup window. Available system cycles are utilized to perform deduplication and offsite replication for an optimal recovery point at the disaster recovery site. Once complete, the onsite data is protected and immediately

available in its full undeduplicated form for fast restores, VM Instant Recoveries and tape copies while the offsite data is ready for disaster recovery.

Simple to Manage, World-Class Customer Support

The ExaGrid system is intuitive and easy to manage, Herron said, and the ExaGrid customer support engineer assigned to Rush Memorial's account helps keep the backups running smoothly.

"The ExaGrid system is so hands-off. I get an email every night that lets me know how our backups ran and what our capacity looks like, and really that's it. Normally, everything runs fine, but on the rare occasion that there's an issue, I just email our support engineer and he helps resolve any problems that come up," he said. "Other than that, the system just chugs along flawlessly each night."

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've worked in IT for over 20 years, and I can comfortably say that ExaGrid support is by far the best support I've ever experienced," he said. "What makes companies stand apart is how well they support their products, and we have some vendors who are incredibly difficult to deal with. The ExaGrid support engineers assigned to our account have always been quick to respond, knowledgeable, and easy to work with."

GRID Architecture, Customer Support Enable Easy System Expansion

Herron said he recently worked with ExaGrid customer support when Rush Memorial decided to expand its ExaGrid system.

"Expanding the ExaGrid system was easy. I physically installed the new system, and then emailed our support engineer

and he remotely configured it. The whole process took just a couple of hours and it was up and running," he said. "Our ExaGrid system was 3-1/2 years old and we were stunned to hear that ExaGrid guarantees compatibility throughout all their models, new and old. Most other vendors would have required an expensive upgrade."

ExaGrid uses a GRID-based configuration, so when the system needs to expand, additional appliances 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 ExaGrid system automatically load balances available capacity, maintaining a virtual pool of storage that is shared across the GRID.

Herron said he would strongly recommend the ExaGrid system to organizations still struggling with tape.

"Anyone still dealing with tape is truly missing out. The ExaGrid system saves so much time and effort each day, and it works seamlessly in the background to deliver good, consistent backups. It's also backed by world-class support. We've been very happy with the system," he said.

ExaGrid and Acronis Backup & Recovery

The ExaGrid system supports cost-effective and scalable disk-based backup using Acronis® Backup & Recovery backup software. ExaGrid also supports the ability to replicate your Acronis Backup & Recovery backups to a second site for offsite disaster recovery protection.

Efficient disk-based backup requires close integration between the backup software and the disk device. That is the advantage delivered by the partnership between Acronis and ExaGrid Systems. Together, Acronis and ExaGrid provide a cost-effective disk-based backup solution that scales to meet the needs of demanding enterprise environments.

About ExaGrid

ExaGrid provides backup storage with a unique landing zone and scale-out architecture. The landing zone provides for the fastest backups, restores and instant VM recoveries. The scale-out architecture includes full appliances in a scalable GRID and provides for a fixed-length backup window as data grows, eliminating expensive forklift upgrades. Learn more at www.exagrid.com.

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