



ExaGrid Dedupe Provides SpawGlass with Significant Storage Savings without Sacrificing Performance

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Keefe Andrews
IT Infrastructure Manager

Customer Overview

Texas-based commercial and civil construction services provider, SpawGlass was founded in 1953 by Louis Spaw and Frank Glass, hence the name SpawGlass. With 10 offices across Texas, the company has approximately 750 employees and is 100 percent employee-owned – with ownership open to all employees. The company’s mission is to provide clients with the absolute best construction experience.

ExaGrid Wins Backup Bake-Off

SpawGlass had been backing up its data to local disk and a storage array, using Veeam. As the company’s infrastructure was nearing its end of life, the IT staff decided it was the right time to refresh its backup environment with a new storage solution. “I attended a presentation about ExaGrid at the Texas Technology Summit and was impressed with how the technology worked and that ExaGrid is solely focused on making a very good backup solution,” said Keefe Andrews, IT Infrastructure Manager at SpawGlass.

“It was important to us that our new solution worked well with Veeam. We got pricing for several solutions, including Dell EMC Data Domain, ExaGrid, and StorageCraft, and then decided to have a bake-off between ExaGrid and StorageCraft. We were able to test how backups and restores worked on both platforms, and how well both integrated with Veeam. We really appreciated that the companies were willing to invest an appliance and test it in our environment without having to commit to a purchase. This allowed us to really evaluate the product and validate the claims that we made,” said Andrews. “What led us to choose ExaGrid was its partnership with Veeam, and the high level of backup performance the ExaGrid system provided compared with other solutions we researched.”

Andrews was impressed that ExaGrid takes the time to get to know a potential customer’s backup environment to ensure proper sizing of the ExaGrid system. “The ExaGrid sales engineer made sure to run calculations on our backup footprint, which is very forward-thinking, so we wouldn’t be



stuck in a situation where we would buy a product and then fully saturate it six to twelve months later.” The ExaGrid system is easy to install and use and works seamlessly with all of the most frequently used backup applications, so an organization can retain its investment in existing applications and processes.

Landing Zone ‘Leverages Dedupe Without Performance Hit’

As a general contractor, SpawGlass has a large amount of construction-related data and documents to back up, and most of it is unstructured data, such as PDFs, drawings, Word, and Excel files. Andrews backs up the data on a daily basis. “We’ve changed our backup strategy to leverage snapshots and our backups. Thankfully, reduced backups during production hours. We’ve been able to switch our backup schedule to do fewer periodic and hourly backups, and we’ve noticed that our backup windows are shorter since switching to ExaGrid,” said Andrews.

Andrews appreciates ExaGrid’s unique Adaptive Deduplication and Landing Zone technology. “ExaGrid’s Landing Zone technology is a great feature because it

Key Benefits:

- ExaGrid dedupe allows SpawGlass to store more backup jobs on same amount of disk
- Backup windows shorter after switch to ExaGrid
- IT staff can quickly restore data from ExaGrid’s Landing Zone
- ExaGrid support provides ‘white-glove’ level of service



allows you to leverage dedupe, but not take the performance hit when you have to do a restore. Whenever we've had to restore any data, our ExaGrid system has always been able to meet our expectations," he said.

ExaGrid writes backups directly to a disk-cache Landing Zone, avoiding inline processing and ensuring the highest possible backup performance, which results 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.

Deduplication Provides Storage Savings

Andrews has noticed that data deduplication has had an impact on storage capacity. "Storage savings is a major advantage of using the ExaGrid system. We've noticed that we're able to do more backups on the same amount of raw disk storage, compared to when we backed up to local disk. It's also been a big timesaver, because we're able to send all of the backup jobs to the ExaGrid system and no longer have to worry about moving jobs around or adjusting our retention policy because drives are getting full. There's a lot less backup administration since we started using ExaGrid."

Andrews also finds that it's easy to keep track of backup performance through daily reporting from the ExaGrid system. "We can monitor how our storage usage is being consumed on the appliance so I've got an idea of how well everything is working and make sure that we're getting that return on investment. We're getting the dedupe ratios that were advertised to us when we purchased," he said.

Veeam uses the information from VMware and Hyper-V and provides deduplication on a "per-job" basis, finding the matching areas of all the virtual disks within a backup job and using metadata to reduce the overall footprint of the backup data. Veeam also has a "dedupe friendly" compression setting which further reduces the size of the Veeam backups in a way that allows the ExaGrid system to achieve further deduplication. This approach typically achieves a 2:1 deduplication ratio.

About ExaGrid

ExaGrid provides tiered backup storage with a unique disk-cache Landing Zone, long-term retention repository and scale-out architecture. ExaGrid's Landing Zone enables the fastest backups, restores, and instant VM recoveries. The retention repository offers the lowest cost for long-term retention. ExaGrid's scale-out architecture includes full appliances in a scalable system. Learn more at www.exagrid.com.

ExaGrid is architected from the ground up to protect virtualized environments and provide deduplication as backups are taken. ExaGrid will achieve up to 5:1 additional deduplication rate. The net result is a combined Veeam and ExaGrid deduplication rate of upwards to 10:1, which greatly reduces the amount of disk storage required.

'White Glove' Support from ExaGrid

One of the features that Andrews appreciates the most is working with an assigned ExaGrid support engineer. "Working with a single support engineer has made getting our questions answered and keeping up with system maintenance effortless. We have a quarterly cadence call, just to check on the system performance. Whenever there is a firmware or disk drive update for the system, my support engineer facilitates it for us. It's given me peace of mind working with our ExaGrid support engineer who knows our environment, and that I'm also working on a platform that's currently being updated. It's not like any other platform where it's up to us to figure it out. We feel like it's a white-glove service that ExaGrid offers to us to help us maintain and get the most out our system," said Andrews.

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 level 2 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.

ExaGrid and Veeam

The combination of ExaGrid's and Veeam's industry-leading virtual server data protection solutions allows customers to utilize Veeam Backup & Replication in VMware, vSphere, and Microsoft Hyper-V virtual environments on ExaGrid's disk-based backup system. This combination provides fast backups and efficient data storage as well as replication to an offsite location for disaster recovery. ExaGrid fully leverages Veeam's built-in backup-to-disk capabilities, and ExaGrid's adaptive data deduplication provides additional data and cost reduction over standard disk solutions. Customers can use Veeam Backup & Replication's built-in source-side deduplication in concert with ExaGrid's disk-based backup system with Adaptive Deduplication to further shrink backups.

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