

The Energy Authority Avoids 'Rip and Replace' by Installing ExaGrid System

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Scott Follick
IT Manager, Service Delivery
and Support
The Energy Authority

Key Benefits:

- Superior price/performance
- GRID architecture and scalability negate future 'rip and replace'
- Deduplication approach provides faster backup performance and quick restores
- Reliable system 'just runs'

Customer Overview

The Energy Authority (TEA) is the strategic partner of choice for public power. Through the customized application of bilateral power trading, risk management, power supply management, RTO trading, and natural gas trading services, TEA is currently collaborating with public power utilities nationwide to help them optimize the value of their generation and load portfolio in wholesale energy markets in a manner that is consistent with each utility's unique risk tolerances. Established in 1997, TEA is headquartered in Jacksonville, Florida, with offices in Seattle (Bellevue), Washington, and Portland, Oregon.

Search for Scalable Backup Solution

The Energy Authority (TEA) is a data-intensive business where solid, consistent backups are paramount. When the company's rapidly growing data came close to exceeding the capacity of its disk-based backup system, TEA's IT staff realized that the system couldn't be upgraded and began looking for a new solution.

"We were looking at a 'rip and replace' situation with our old disk-based backup solution because it simply wasn't expandable," said Scott Follick, IT manager, service delivery and support for TEA. "We needed a new scalable backup solution that could deliver the capacity we needed along with the scalability necessary to grow along with our backup requirements."

ExaGrid Delivers Superior Price/Performance, Seamless Scalability

After looking at solutions from ExaGrid, Quantum and EMC Data Domain, TEA chose the ExaGrid system based on price and scalability.

"We looked at several different solutions, and the ExaGrid system was the clear price/performance winner," said Follick. "We also were impressed with its scalability and the way we could grow the system over

time without the need to do a complete replacement."

ExaGrid uses a GRID-based configuration, where each appliance contains processing power, memory, bandwidth, and disk. When the system needs to expand, additional appliance nodes are attached to the GRID, bringing with them additional processing power, memory, bandwidth, and disk. This type of configuration allows the system to maintain all the aspects of performance as the amount of data grows, and you only pay for the amount of processing power, memory and bandwidth as you need it. In addition, as new ExaGrid appliance nodes are added to the GRID, the ExaGrid automatically load balances available capacity, maintaining a virtual pool of storage that is shared across the GRID.

Post-Process Data Deduplication Speeds Backups and Restores

TEA uses the ExaGrid system to back up and protect its SQL and Oracle RMAN data and will be integrating the system with its backup application, CommVault Simpana in the coming months. The firm installed a primary ExaGrid system in its Jacksonville datacenter and a second system offsite in Atlanta for disaster recovery.

"One of the things we liked about the ExaGrid solution was its data deduplication approach. We looked carefully at different



types of deduplication technology, and we liked that the ExaGrid system backs up the data to a landing zone before the deduplication process begins, so we get better performance and restores are faster," Follick said. "We're currently seeing data deduplication ratios of 9:1 for Oracle data and 7:1 for SQL."

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. 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.

Fast, Simple Installation and Management

Follick said that installing the ExaGrid system was simple and straightforward.

"I worked with our ExaGrid customer support engineer to install the system and we were able to get it up and running fairly quickly. It really is a 'set it and forget it' type of technology. I get a daily report with details on the state of each backup job and ExaGrid reaches out and notifies me if there's a problem with the system. I'm not manning or managing the device every day – it just runs," he said. "We also have a good relationship with our support engineer. He's proactive and knowledgeable and is a good resource for us."

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.

Scalability in Just Minutes

"We've expanded the ExaGrid system at our primary site, and we're planning to expand it in our disaster recovery site within the next 30 days. It's incredibly simple to scale the system. Once the unit is racked up and we assign an IP address, ExaGrid support takes over and finishes the setup. It takes only a few minutes," said Follick.

Follick said that installing the ExaGrid system was the right decision for TEA.

"We have a great deal of confidence in the ExaGrid system. It's rock-solid and it's easily scalable, so we can grow the system as our backup requirements grow," he said.

Intelligent Data Protection

ExaGrid's turn-key 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.

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