

Thompson Rivers University Gives High Marks to ExaGrid's Disk-Based Backup with Deduplication System

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



THOMPSON RIVERS
UNIVERSITY

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Rory Read
Senior IT Analyst
Thompson Rivers University

Customer Overview

The doors of Cariboo College opened in 1970 to deliver career-technical and two-year academic university transfer programs during the provinces' initial expansion of post-secondary education. The last two decades have seen a transition from community college to an innovative university-college, and now to a full provincial university known as Thompson Rivers University. With a main campus located in the heart of Kamloops, British Columbia, the university has a student population of approximately 25,000 comprised of campus and distance education students.

Expanding Backup Window Nears 20 Hours, Causes Evaluation of Faster Solution

Thompson Rivers University (TRU) was storing most of its 10TB of data on tape, and its backup window was approaching an unacceptable 20 hours. In addition, over the years TRU had been using a variety of backup software that was used for different data sets, making the management and administration of backups in general cumbersome and untenable. Because of this, the university sought to streamline the types of backup applications used as well as reducing its backup window.

In addition to its growing backup window, TRU was challenged with the time and resources required to do restores. Said Rory Read, senior IT analyst, "When a restore needed to be done, there were often multiple people to consult because not everyone knew how to run every backup application."

The university did a cost-benefit analysis of its alternatives, primarily cost against data throughput in order to shorten their painfully long backup window. They found that throughput was directly impacted by the methodology of data deduplication used. After weighing the options, the university decided to implement the ExaGrid solution.

TRU Sees Reduction in Backup Window of 50%, Simplified Restores

Since deploying the ExaGrid solution, the university has experienced a 50% reduction in backup window. The data that used to take 20 hours to back up now takes less than 10. Restore requests that used to be complicated tasks are now completed in minutes. "Restores are so much faster," said Read. "I don't have to spend time locating the correct tape and if I don't have it, recall it. It's not an issue anymore."

Unlike his old tape backups, Read likes the peace of mind that the ExaGrid has provided. "Using the ExaGrid, we know for sure that we're going to be able to restore data, and I feel very good about that."

University Reports Deduplication Ratio of 15:1

"One of the deciding factors for us was how the ExaGrid handled deduplication," said Read. "Doing the deduplication after the backup is complete has shrunk our backup window considerably, and our average deduplication ratio is currently 15:1, which is pretty decent."

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

EXAGRID™

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

Ease of Installation, Dedicated Customer Support

"The installation was simple," said Read. "We just racked the appliances, plugged them in, did a little network work, and we were ready to go." Since the ExaGrid works with the university's existing backup application, Symantec NetBackup, all that was required was to repoint their backups to the ExaGrid.

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.

Intelligent Data Protection

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.

ExaGrid is the leader in cost-effective disk-based backup solutions. A highly scalable system that works with existing backup applications, the ExaGrid system is ideal for companies looking to quickly eliminate the hassles of tape backup while reducing their existing backup windows. ExaGrid's innovative approach minimizes the amount of data to be stored by providing standard data compression for the most recent backups along with byte-level data deduplication technology for all previous backups. Customers can deploy ExaGrid at primary and secondary sites to supplement or eliminate offsite tapes with live data repositories or for disaster recovery.

ExaGrid and Symantec NetBackup

Symantec's NetBackup delivers high performance data protection that scales to protect the largest UNIX, Windows, Linux and NetWare environments.

With complete protection from remote office to center to vault, NetBackup offers a single console for all backup and recovery operations. Organizations using NetBackup can look to ExaGrid as an alternative to tape for nightly backups. ExaGrid sits behind existing backup applications, such as NetBackup, providing faster and more reliable backups and restores. In a network running NetBackup, 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.

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

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.