Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES Gives ExaGrid High Grades for Fast Backups and Restores

Customer Overview

Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES (Board of Cooperative Educational Services) is an organization which provides quality educational services and programs for 47 school districts and residents of Wayne, Ontario, Seneca and Yates counties in the State of New York.

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> **Dennis Bradley**
> **Network Analyst**
> **Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES**

Need for Faster Backups and Restores Led to ExaGrid

Long backup times had become routine at the Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES. After dealing with weekly full backup times that stretched 40 hours or more and incremental backups that ran for six hours each night, the IT staff finally decided to look for a new solution that could speed backups and reduce reliance on tape.

"Our backup and restore times were too long and we were tired of dealing with tape," said Dennis Bradley, network analyst at Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES. "We looked at several different approaches and finally decided that disk-based backup was the only way to go."

After narrowing the field down to solutions from Data Domain and ExaGrid, the Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES chose ExaGrid's disk-based backup system with data deduplication. The ExaGrid system works alongside the district's existing backup application, CommVault Galaxy.

"We spent a lot of time evaluating both products. In the end, we preferred ExaGrid's approach to data deduplication over Data Domain's. ExaGrid's post-process data deduplication ensures that our backups run as quickly as possible because the data is deduplicated after it hits the landing zone," said Bradley.

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 changes, requiring minimal WAN bandwidth.

Faster Backups and Restores

Since installing the ExaGrid system, the district's full backup times have been reduced from 40 hours to 8 hours, and nightly incremental backup times have been reduced from 6 hours to 1-1/2 hours maximum.

"Our backups are incredibly fast, and they run flawlessly each and every night," said Bradley. "Also, our restores are nearly instantaneous," Bradley said. "ExaGrid's data deduplication does a wonderful job at maximizing the amount of data we can keep on the system. It's terrific to have so much data available for restores."

Easy Installation and Responsive, Knowledgeable Customer Support

Bradley said that installing the ExaGrid system was an easy process.

"I installed the ExaGrid system myself, and it was simple and straightforward. The ExaGrid works seamlessly with CommVault Galaxy, so all I had to do was rack the system and set up shares. The rest was all done within CommVault. Because CommVault sees the ExaGrid system as simply a disk with storage, we were able to send data directly to it. The ExaGrid was up in running in less than half a day."

EXAGRID™

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.

"ExaGrid's customer support has simply been top-notch. Our support engineer goes above and beyond, always staying in touch, monitoring our system and keeping us up to date on things. He also has a great deal of knowledge about the ExaGrid product and about CommVault as well. He's even helped me out with CommVault issues that had nothing to do with the ExaGrid system," said Bradley. "I would put ExaGrid's customer support at the very top of the list out of all the vendors we deal with."

Easy to Scale

ExaGrid's GRID computing software makes the system highly scalable, and when plugged into a switch, different sized configurations can be mixed and matched into a single GRID system with capacities of up to a 130TB full backup plus retention. Once virtualized, they appear as a single system to the backup server, and load balancing of all data across servers is automatic.

Bradley said that when the district chose the ExaGrid system, scalability wasn't a critical part of the decision criteria, but when it came time to expand the system, the IT staff was pleased with how easy it was.

"We didn't really spend a lot of time on scalability during the evaluation process. However, once we had our first ExaGrid system we were very pleased with it so when it came time to expand the system, we didn't look anywhere else. We went straight to ExaGrid," he said.

The district initially purchased a 4TB system and then added a second 10TB unit to accommodate additional backup data.

"Expanding the system was easy. I just racked the additional unit and it was ready to go within an hour. Our support engineer then remoted into the system and finished the configuration. It couldn't have been easier," Bradley said. "The ExaGrid is a very flexible system and we love its scalability. It's really taken the pain out of our backups."

ExaGrid and CommVault Galaxy

CommVault Galaxy Backup and Recovery software contains extensive capabilities to simplify the management of backup media resources. Galaxy software writes backup data to a broad collection of storage devices, including disk as a media target. This ability to write to magnetic disk as a functional equal of all other media types while exploiting the random access nature of the disk media sets Galaxy software apart. Organizations using Galaxy can look to ExaGrid as an alternative to tape for nightly backups. ExaGrid sits behind existing backup applications, such as Galaxy, providing faster and more reliable backups and restores. In a network running Galaxy, 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 SATA drives with zone-level data deduplication, delivering a disk-based solution that is more cost effective than standard SATA drives. 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 standard SATA drives. 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.

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**.