

Webster Central School District Adds up Cost Savings with ExaGrid Disk-Based Backups

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Quentin Spiegel
Senior Network Technician
Webster Central School
District

Customer Overview

The Webster Central School District (WCSD) is located eight miles outside of Rochester, New York. WCSD is Monroe County's second largest and fastest growing suburban school district, serving approximately 9,000 students in 11 schools, kindergarten through grade 12.

Need for More Streamlined Management, Better Disaster Recovery

Webster Central School District (WCSD) had been backing up data from its 4,000 computers and nearly 40 servers to a 24-slot tape library, but fast data growth left the district's IT staff scrambling to rotate and manage tape each day, and disaster recovery was a looming concern.

"We kept some retention on tape but were largely dependent upon shadow copies from our Windows server for disaster recovery," said Quentin Spiegel, senior network technician for the Webster Central School District. "That technology wasn't really meant for long-term retention or disaster recovery, so we were exposed. We considered purchasing a bigger tape library, but once we added up the cost of the tapes and the man hours needed for tape management, we realized that it would make more sense to purchase a disk-to-disk solution with data deduplication."

Cost-Effective ExaGrid System Works Out of the Box with Backup Exec to Reduce Learning Curve

After looking at several different products on the market, the WCSD chose a dual-site ExaGrid disk-based backup system with data deduplication. The ExaGrid systems work along with the district's existing backup application, Symantec Backup Exec, to back up both physical servers and virtual server farms. The ExaGrid units are currently

backed up to the district's tape library, but one will be installed offsite in the near future to handle disaster recovery.

"The ExaGrid system was the most cost-effective solution we looked at, and we liked the fact that it worked out of the box with Backup Exec. That really helped keep the costs down and it reduced our learning curve so we could hit the ground running," said Spiegel. "We had nearly 150 tapes in rotation, and they were expensive to purchase and manage. The ExaGrid system offered a terrific total cost of ownership because we were able to significantly cut our reliance on tape and our management costs were reduced to almost nothing."

Data Deduplication Maximizes Disk Space and Speeds Backup Times

Spiegel said that ExaGrid's data deduplication technology helps to reduce the amount of data stored on the system.

"ExaGrid's data deduplication technology is unparalleled. It does an amazing job at taking a huge amount of data and reducing it down so that we can maximize retention," he said. "We're currently backing up 6TB of data and to be honest, I shudder at the thought of putting that much data on tape. Our full backups had been running nearly 24 hours but with the ExaGrid, we've been able to break them down into smaller partitions that take only two hours to run."

ExaGrid combines last backup compression along with data deduplication, which stores changes from backup to backup instead

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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 postprocess 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.

Fast Installation, Easy Management and Restores

"Installation was extremely simple. I worked with our ExaGrid support engineer over the phone, and he gave me a short overview of the system and then helped me set up the first share. After that, we were up and running," Spiegel said. "Our support engineer is wonderful. He's always on top of things and he's easily accessible if I have a question or issue."

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.

"One of our major goals in deploying a new backup solution was to reduce the amount of man hours we were spending on managing backups," said Spiegel. "Managing backups used to be about 30 percent of my job, but now I only spend a few minutes each day glancing over the logs. The ExaGrid system is intuitive and easy to use, and because of that, we save a tremendous amount of time. I no longer have to live and die by tapes."

GRID Architecture Ensures Smooth Scalability

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.

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.

"Our data is constantly growing so scalability is important to us. ExaGrid's architecture will enable us to gracefully expand the system in terms of capacity and performance when the time comes," he said.

Spiegel said that installing the ExaGrid system has reduced the cost of backups for the district.

"The ExaGrid system has paid for itself over and over again," he said. "Not only did purchasing the system make financial sense, but it makes me and the rest of the staff here more productive because we're able to put our time and energy into other initiatives."

ExaGrid and Symantec Backup Exec

Symantec Backup Exec provides cost-effective, highperformance, and certified disk-to-disk-to-tape backup and recovery – including continuous data protection for Microsoft Exchange, SQL, file servers, and workstations. Highperformance agents and options provide fast, flexible, granular protection and scalable management of local and remote server backups.

Intelligent Data Protection

ExaGrid's turnkey disk-based backup system combines high quality SATA drives with byte-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.