



YWCA Broadens Data Protection by Expanding Backups with ExaGrid-Veeam Solution

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

**eliminating racism
empowering women**
ywca
Seattle | King | Snohomish

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Oliver Hansen
IT Director

Key Benefits:

- ExaGrid supports replication to AWS cloud storage for DR
- ExaGrid provides YWCA with ‘consistent backup performance’ and fixed backup windows despite increased backup jobs
- ExaGrid-Veeam deduplication maximizes storage, allows YWCA to back up entire environment
- Reliable backups and easy restores give YWCA’s IT staff confidence that data is protected

Customer Overview

Established in 1894, YWCA Seattle | King | Snohomish is the oldest nonprofit in the region focused on the needs of women and girls, and is the second largest YWCA association in the United States. With more than 20 locations across two counties, each one of YWCA’s facilities reflects the growing needs and changing demographics in the region, offering culturally appropriate employment, counseling, family services, and more.

ExaGrid-Veeam Solution Chosen to Replace NAS

The IT staff at YWCA Seattle | King | Snohomish were backing up the organization’s data to a Drobo NAS device with Microsoft Windows’ built-in backup applications. The IT staff wanted to add data deduplication to the backup environment, so the organization’s reseller presented a few options including Dell EMC solutions, as well as Veeam and ExaGrid. “We were looking at software and storage at the same time,” said Oliver Hansen, the YWCA’s IT director. “ExaGrid and Veeam provided all of the features that we were looking for, and both products offered better pricing compared to the Dell EMC solutions we’d looked at early on.”

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 DR.

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.



Virtualizing Backup Environment with ExaGrid and Veeam

The YWCA installed an ExaGrid system at its primary site, which has recently been set up to replicate to Amazon Web Services (AWS) cloud storage. The ExaGrid Virtual Disaster Recovery Target (VDRT) allows customers to replicate deduplicated backup data from a physical onsite ExaGrid appliance to the VDRT (a virtual appliance – VM) in AWS for an offsite disaster recovery (DR) copy.

Hansen backs up the nonprofit’s data in daily incrementals, along with a weekly synthetic full. “We have a mix of physical and virtual servers and we’re able to back up the physical servers and then restore them to virtual using Veeam and ExaGrid. That’s helped us to move the virtualization process along.”

He has been impressed with the speed and reliability of backups to the ExaGrid system. “Backing up data to our ExaGrid is definitely faster than to the NAS we’d used. We back up much more data now, but the backup



window is nearly the same. We weren't able to coordinate our backup schedule with the NAS, so sometimes multiple backup jobs would run at the same time, which slowed everything down. ExaGrid offers consistent backup performance, and now our backups run as scheduled."

In addition to providing reliable backups, the ExaGrid-Veeam solution has made it easier to restore data, when necessary. "Whenever I've had to restore a file, or even a VM, it's been a simple, straightforward process. We weren't always sure what to expect when restoring data from our previous solution, as sometimes it would take a few hours to mount an old backup, or worse yet, sometimes the backups were corrupt. Now that we have ExaGrid and Veeam in place, I'm confident that we can fulfill restore requests," said Hansen.

ExaGrid writes backups directly to a disk 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 DR 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 DR.

Adding Dedupe Allows YWCA to Broaden Data Protection

One of the major considerations the YWCA had for choosing a new backup solution was adding data deduplication to its backup environment. "Adding deduplication has made quite an impact on our backups. As a nonprofit, we often have to make do with what we have, so in the past we had to prioritize backing up our critical servers due to space constraints. Now that we've added ExaGrid to our environment, deduplication has maximized our storage capacity, and we're able to back almost all of our servers, beyond just the critical ones. In addition, we are able to keep the same retention period, despite backing up much more data than ever before," said Hansen.

About ExaGrid

ExaGrid provides intelligent hyperconverged storage for backup with a unique landing zone and scale-out architecture. The landing zone enables the fastest backups, restores, and instant VM recoveries. The scale-out architecture includes full appliances in a scalable system and ensures a fixed-length backup window as data grows, eliminating expensive and disruptive forklift upgrades. Learn more at www.exagrid.com.

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.

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.

'Less Worry, More Confidence' in Backups and Restores

Hansen likes ExaGrid's approach to the support it provides to its customers. "I've had a great experience working with ExaGrid customer support. I really appreciate having a single point of contact; it's so nice to speak with the same person each time, who knows our system and understands how our environment is set up. My customer support engineer is very responsive and able to remote in to look at our system whenever we have an issue. He also takes the time to explain what's going on in the background that is causing an issue and the steps we can take to resolve it. Recently, he helped us set up the virtual ExaGrid appliance in AWS. It took some work on our end, but it was great not to have to do it by ourselves.

"Since switching to ExaGrid, I've had less worry and more confidence in our backups and restores. It's a very reliable system, so once you set it up, it just runs," said Hansen. 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.

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