

Adventist Health Cures Backup Woes with ExaGrid

Customer Overview

Adventist Health operates health care facilities throughout California, Hawaii, Oregon and Washington. Headquartered in Roseville, California, the Adventist Health system includes 19 hospitals with more than 2,800 beds, 18,000 employees, numerous clinics and outpatient facilities, 16 home care agencies and three joint-venture retirement centers.

Nine Hour Nightly Backup Strains Network, Creates Problems for Users

The IT staff at Adventist Health was having difficulty completing tape backups at three of its largest hospitals within its six hour backup window. With its nightly backups pushing nine hours or more each night, Adventist Health's network was severely taxed each morning and users were experiencing problems.

"The long process of backing up to tape was straining our IT department and affecting productivity," said Michael Aubry, site director for 3 of Adventist Health's hospitals. "Our email system would crash towards the end of our backups because the system was so taxed. Our users were being impacted because the strain on the system would often cause a client's PC to crash. We started trying to juggle backup jobs but it wasn't working."

New HIPAA Regulations, Retention Policies Slowed Backups

Adventist Health was also dealing with new HIPAA regulations which required healthcare providers to put encryption on tapes as they were being made, so if a tape was lost, the data couldn't be read without a proper key.

"Encrypting the tapes really slowed down the process and made our backups even longer," said Aubry. "Because we carried our tapes offsite, it was critical that we encrypted our data just to mitigate risk."

The IT staff at Adventist Health also found it difficult to manage its retention policies with tape. "We have different retention policies for different types of data, and it was hard to manage it with tape," said Aubry. "It was a hassle to physically move tapes around to meet our retention policies and it took up a lot of staff resources."

Evaluating Different Approaches to Disk-based Backup

"The single most important thing an IT department does is back up data, but it's difficult to justify the cost of a new backup system," said Aubry. "We decided the time was right to reevaluate our approach to backup because we were consistently missing our backup window and our users were being affected."

Aubry and his team chose ExaGrid after evaluating the system side-by-side against a disk-based backup solution from a competitor.

"In terms of performance, the ExaGrid solution was significantly better across the board, on dailies, month ends, everything," said Aubry. "ExaGrid's approach to data de-duplication, and the fact that it performs it post-process instead of in-line made a huge difference. The ExaGrid system was the clear winner."

ExaGrid's byte-level data de-duplication technology stores changes from backup to backup instead of storing full file copies. This unique approach reduces the disk space required by 10 to 50:1 or more, delivering unparalleled cost savings and performance. ExaGrid delivers fast backup performance because data is written directly to disk, and data de-duplication is performed post-process after the data is stored to reduce data.

Adventist Health currently has four ExaGrid systems at three different hospitals that perform full backups from 24 physical and virtual servers containing critical clinical data, patient information, and other business documents. The ExaGrid systems work alongside Adventist Health's existing backup application, Symantec's Backup Exec™, and nightly backups are now completed in only four hours.

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Michael Aubry
Site Director
Adventist Health

Scalability, Price and Performance



Points to ExaGrid for System-wide Disk-based Backup Standard

For Adventist Health, one of the main objectives in selecting a disk-based backup system was to choose a system that could be recommended as standard technology for its network of hospitals. Because the hospitals vary in size, scalability was an important factor.

"We liked that fact that we could recommend ExaGrid to our other facilities and they could choose to start out with a system as small as 1TB and grow linearly in 1TB segments from there," said Aubry. "ExaGrid's GRID architecture is extremely scalable and enables us to grow the system as our backup needs increase."

"Price was also a major consideration for us. The competing system we were quoted cost twice as much as the ExaGrid solution. ExaGrid was superior in scalability, price and performance," said Aubry.

Faster Restores, Backup Window Reduced by Two-Thirds with ExaGrid

Adventist Health has placed ExaGrid systems in two of its California hospitals, Hanford Community Medical Center and Selma Community Hospital. Data from local servers is backed up to the ExaGrid in each facility and then the ExaGrid's synchronize and act as disaster recovery sites for each other. ExaGrid systems at the Hanford facility also back up data from the Central Valley General Hospital.

Since moving its backups to ExaGrid, backups have gone from nine hours to four hours. Additionally, restores are faster.

"Since installing the ExaGrid systems, our backups are now completed well within our backup window and our users are able to work productively," said Aubry. "With 1800 users, we restore files on a regular basis and the ExaGrid gives us near-instantaneous restores. Additionally, since it is a disk-based system, we are able to manage our retention policies more effectively."

ExaGrid and Symantec Backup Exec

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

Organizations using Symantec Backup Exec can look to ExaGrid as an alternative to tape for nightly backups. ExaGrid sits behind existing backup applications, such as Symantec Backup Exec, providing faster and more reliable backups and restores. In a network running Symantec Backup Exec, 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 byte-level data de-duplication, delivering a disk-based solution that is more cost effective than standard SATA drives. ExaGrid's byte-level data de-duplication technology stores only the changes from backup to backup instead of storing full file copies, reducing the amount of disk space needed by 10 to 50:1, or more, resulting in a solution that is 25 to 30% the cost of standard SATA drives.

ExaGrid is easy to install and use and works seamlessly with popular backup applications, so organizations can retain their investment in existing applications.

ExaGrid can be used at a primary site and at a second site to supplement or eliminate offsite tapes with a live data repository or for disaster recovery. When a second site is used, the cost savings are even greater because ExaGrid's byte-level data de-duplication technology moves only changes, requiring minimal WAN bandwidth.

For more information about ExaGrid, please visit our website

ABOUT EXAGRID

ExaGrid is the leader in cost-effective disk-based backup solutions. A scalable system that works with existing backup applications, ExaGrid 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 a primary site and at a second site to supplement or eliminate offsite tapes with a live data repository or for disaster recovery.

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