

Corporate Communications Group Streamlines Backups with ExaGrid

Customer Overview

The Corporate Communications Group (CCG) is a full-service marketing communications support company that has been offering specialized marketing services for over 40 years. CCG began as a fulfillment company, filling orders for sales and promotional materials, branch offices, brokers, distributors and customers, and has evolved its operations, capabilities and expertise to become a full service marketing communications support company. CCG acquired a number of top-rated companies, including Business Printing Systems, Scan-Com Corporation, Central Lettershop and Royal Advertising. Based in West Caldwell, New Jersey, CCG also has offices in Cleveland, Ohio and Seattle, Washington.

14-Hour Tape Backs, Difficult Restore Processes

In an effort to meet growing backup requirements, the IT staff at CCG had moved from using single tape drives to a new tape library, but with its SQL database growing larger by the day, even the upgraded equipment couldn't keep up with rapidly increasing demands. With backups running 14 hours or more each day, users at CCG experienced network slowdowns each morning, and the IT staff found managing tape and restoring files time consuming and painful.

"Meeting our backup window was a challenge. We needed a solution that would provide relief for our long backup windows and eliminate the daily hassles of backing up and restoring data with tape," said George Grant, system administrator at CCG.

Two-site ExaGrid System Provides Both Primary Backup and Live Data Repository for Disaster Recovery

CCG purchased a two-site ExaGrid system to streamline its backup processes. One ExaGrid system is located at CCG's datacenter in West Caldwell and performs primary backups, and the second system will be located ten miles away in another facility to act as a live data repository for disaster recovery. The ExaGrid system works alongside CCG's existing backup application, Symantec's Backup Exec.

Prior to installing the ExaGrid system, Grant carried a briefcase containing tapes home each night in case they were needed for disaster recovery. The two-site ExaGrid system will enable CCG to eliminate tape completely.

"The ExaGrid system provides a great return on investment.

We will be able to eliminate the cost of tape and tape drives and we won't have to spend valuable IT staff time on managing and transporting tapes around," said Grant. "Also, the fact that the ExaGrid system worked right out of the box with our existing backup application meant that we didn't have to purchase or learn another new application."

Nightly Backups Reduced from 14 Hours to 90 Minutes, Data De-duplication Maximizes Disk Space and Makes Restores Easier

Since installing the ExaGrid system, CCG's backup times have been reduced from nearly 14 hours to an hour and a half and restoring files is less time consuming.

"Our backups are now finished by 7:30 at night. I just check the log in the morning and I can go on with my day. I don't have to deal with a slow network or with tapes," said Grant. "In addition, restores are now extremely pain free and fast. Restoring data from tape was a nightmare, especially if the information was on an old tape."

Strong data de-duplication technology was also a key reason CCG chose ExaGrid.

"ExaGrid's data de-duplication technology is very efficient at reducing our data and really maximizes the disk space," said Grant. "We have three months of data on our ExaGrid system so locating files is easy and restoring data is a point-and-click operation," said Grant.

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George Grant
System Administrator
Corporate Communications Group



ExaGrid combines last backup compression along with data de-duplication, which stores changes from backup to backup instead 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 de-duplication is performed post-process after the data is stored.

GRID Software Provides Seamless Scalability

“Our data is constantly growing and it had been a challenge to keep up with our backup demands using tape,” said Grant. “With ExaGrid, we have the ability to quickly and seamlessly add on additional appliances to increase capacity as our data grows.”

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 60TB or more. Once virtualized, they appear as a single system to the backup server, and load balancing of all data across servers is automatic.

Industry Leading Customer Support

ExaGrid's industry-leading customer support team is staffed by trained, in-house engineers who are dedicated to individual accounts. The ExaGrid system is fully supported and was designed and manufactured for maximum uptime with redundant, hot-swappable components.

“ExaGrid's customer support team is excellent and we love the fact that we have a dedicated support engineer. He dialed in and assisted me in setting up the system and it was up and running within an hour,” said Grant. “Our support engineer is extremely knowledgeable and proactive. He recently called to let us know that a firmware upgrade had been released and he was able to install it remotely for us.

ExaGrid's support really is high caliber and we have a high level of confidence in both the system and support.”

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 server for backup to disk.

Intelligent Data Protection

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 de-duplication 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.

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

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ExaGrid Systems, Inc.

2000 West Park Drive
Westborough, MA 01581

1 800.868.6985
www.ExaGrid.com

