

Conwy Denbighshire Trust Cures Backup Issues with ExaGrid

Customer Overview

Conwy & Denbighshire NHS Trust provides acute, community, mental health and learning disabilities healthcare services to central North Wales through a network of hospitals, health centres and clinics.

Pushing the Limits of D2D Led to Retention Issues, Poor Backup Speeds

The IT staff at Conwy & Denbighshire NHS had backed up its data to tape for years and had turned to disk-to-disk (D2D) backup in hopes of improving its backup window and restore speed. However, the medical facility quickly learned that although D2D was faster, it could barely keep two weeks of data on disk before reaching its capacity.

"We like to have easy access to 30 days worth of backup data in case a user notices a problem and needs a file restored," said Andy Stott, IT systems manager, Conwy & Denbighshire NHS Trust. "Backing up to disk was a vast improvement over tape, but didn't offer the retention we needed to serve our users and we were still running over our 12 hour backup window."

ExaGrid Improves Backup Speed, Retention

Working with U.K.-based reseller Clunk Click, the Trust initially considered expanding its D2D capabilities but chose ExaGrid's disk-based backup system due to its ease of use and fast backup and restore speeds. The ExaGrid works in conjunction with the Trust's existing backup application, Symantec's Backup Exec™.

Since installing the ExaGrid system, the Trust has been able to significantly improve backup times on each of the 15 Windows-based servers it protects with ExaGrid. For example, backup times for one server have been reduced from 17 hours using D2D to less than 12 hours using ExaGrid. Restores are nearly instantaneous.

"ExaGrid has more than delivered in terms of backup and restore speeds," said Stott. "With ExaGrid, our backup speeds have improved tremendously and we can now keep four weeks of data on the system, so data is always available if we need to restore files."

Improved Data Security

The Trust uses the ExaGrid system to handle full backups of its data each night at Glan Clwyd Hospital in Denbighshire.

The datacenter, enhancing security because the backup data is stored away from live data and off the network.

"We handle sensitive data and we are always mindful of data security," said Stott. "Using the ExaGrid system to handle our backups has improved our data security. Once the files are on the ExaGrid, they're locked into the system and the only access to it is via our backup server. With a network attached storage box, there's the possibility that the data can be hacked. With tape backups, tapes can be lost or stolen. ExaGrid gives us a higher degree of confidence in our data security."

ExaGrid's Data De-duplication Delivers 15:1 Data Reduction, GRID Architecture Offers Easy Scalability

ExaGrid's data de-duplication has been delivering 15:1 data reduction, enabling the Trust to meet its retention goals and to save money on infrastructure costs.

"We've been amazed at the ExaGrid's data reduction capabilities and are now able to easily keep a month of data on our system," said Stott. "Because the ExaGrid is so effective at reducing data, we were able to purchase a smaller system with lower power requirements and rack space which will save us money in the long run."

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 to reduce data.

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IT Systems Manager
Conwy & Denbighshire NHS Trust



Flexibility and scalability was also an important feature in choosing ExaGrid to back up data from its 1000 user Glan Clwyd Hospital. The Trust now backs up business and clinical data, including its dental system, theatres management and gastroenterology imaging system to the ExaGrid, and is considering backing up additional data at Glan Clwyd Hospital and adding ExaGrid systems at some of its other facilities. ExaGrid's data de-duplication technology is extremely efficient when used at multiple sites because it moves only the byte-level changes, or only 1/50th the data, across the WAN.

"With the ExaGrid system, we are able to meet our backup needs today and into the future. As we begin to backup more systems with ExaGrid, we can deploy the systems across a WAN in multiple sites at a reasonable cost and we can easily add additional ExaGrid systems easily to accommodate new backup requirements," said Stott.

ExaGrid's GRID architecture provides easy scalability, so the system can grow as the Trust's backup requirements grow. When plugged into a switch, additional ExaGrid systems virtualize into one another, appearing as a single system to the backup server, and load balancing of all data across servers is automatic.

Resilient Hardware, Auto Notification, Superior Customer Support

ExaGrid is easy to install and use, with a hardware platform that features redundant and hot-swappable components along with advanced software with automatic notification features and outstanding customer support.

"We had the ExaGrid up and running in 30 minutes and were ready for backups that night," said Stott. "The system works seamlessly with Backup Exec and didn't have to change any of our backup processes. Also, ExaGrid's customer support is extremely responsive and knowledgeable. We've been extremely pleased with ExaGrid's high level of support and the system as a whole has greatly improved our backup capabilities and streamlined our operations."

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 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.

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.

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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