

Mutual of Enumclaw Insurance Group Gains Faster Backups with ExaGrid

Customer Overview

Mutual of Enumclaw Insurance Group was founded in 1898 and is composed of Mutual of Enumclaw Insurance Company and Enumclaw Property and Casualty Insurance Company. Mutual of Enumclaw Insurance Company is licensed to do business in Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Utah and has written premiums totaling more than \$294 million as of December 2007. Enumclaw Property and Casualty Insurance Company is licensed to do business in Washington, Oregon and Idaho and has written premiums totaling more than \$27 million as of December 2007. The company is headquartered in Enumclaw, Washington.

Long Backup and Tape Copy Times Frustrate IT Department

With nearly 20TB of data to protect, it's critical that Mutual of Enumclaw's backup systems operate as efficiently as possible. Each night, the company's IT department had been backing up data to a competing deduplication storage system and then to tape, but slow system performance led to long backup times. Weekly full backups to the competing system took over 38 hours and incremental backups took 12 to 18 hours to complete each night. Tape copies ran nearly continuously.

"We had outgrown the system we initially implemented and it simply wasn't feasible to upgrade it. Upgrading the system would have been cost prohibitive and there were no guarantees that the performance would be where we needed it to be," said Randy Johnson, senior network architect at Mutual of Enumclaw Insurance Company.

Immediate Performance Gains with ExaGrid, Two-site System Provides Improved Disaster Recovery

The IT department decided to evaluate a disk-based backup system from ExaGrid and immediately noticed a big performance gain.

"From the minute we turned the ExaGrid system on we saw a tremendous improvement in performance," said Johnson. "The ExaGrid system was approximately a third of the cost of the competition's system, and it had superior performance, scalability and management. Also, ExaGrid's built-in replication features meant that we could install a second site and improve our disaster recovery and reduce our reliance on tape."

Mutual of Enumclaw purchased a two-site ExaGrid system, installing the first in its main datacenter in Enumclaw and the second at its disaster recovery site in Tukwila.

The company is currently upgrading the systems and will have a total of five 10TB systems at the main data center and 3 at the disaster recovery site. The ExaGrid systems work alongside the company's existing backup application, CommVault Simpana™.

Since installing the ExaGrid system, Mutual of Enumclaw has seen a dramatic reduction in its backup times. Full backups, which had been taking more than 38 hours with the competing system now take around 12 hours using the ExaGrid. Incremental backups have dropped from 12 to 18 hours to less than five hours.

"The ExaGrid system has really made a big improvement in our backup times. From what we can see, ExaGrid's post-process approach to data deduplication is much more efficient than the competition's inline process, and we believe that it accounts for a big part of the performance increase. We've been experiencing data deduplication rates as high as 27:1," said Johnson.

ExaGrid's post-process data deduplication processes data after it has landed on the system, ensuring the fastest backup times possible. ExaGrid combines last backup compression along with data deduplication, 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 deduplication is performed post-process after the data is stored to reduce data. When a second site is used, the cost savings are even greater because ExaGrid's byte-level data deduplication technology moves only changes, requiring minimal WAN bandwidth.

"The ExaGrid was approximately a third of the cost of a competing solution, and it had superior performance, scalability and management. Also, ExaGrid's built-in replication features meant that we could install an additional site and improve our disaster recovery and reduce our reliance on tape."

Randy Johnson
Sr. Network Architect
Mutual of Enumclaw



Modular Architecture Ensures Easy Scalability

Mutual of Enumclaw is a growing company with fast growing data. In fact, the company recently doubled the amount of servers it backs up from 140 to 290. The IT staff has expanded the ExaGrid system to meet increased backup demands. "Expanding the ExaGrid system was fairly easy and straightforward. We worked with ExaGrid's support over the phone for approximately 20 minutes and the upgrade was complete," said Johnson. "The system's modular design makes it easy to add capacity."

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 60TB 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.

Superior Management and Reporting, Responsive Customer Support

"We were able to install the ExaGrid system ourselves and found the installation process very easy. Also, the management interface is extremely intuitive. With the ExaGrid, we have the option of working with the system via a web interface with using the built in reporting tools," said Johnson. "We've also had a very positive experience with ExaGrid's customer support engineers. They have been extremely responsive and knowledgeable and have worked closely with us to make several custom adjustments to help increase performance even more," said Johnson. ExaGrid comes packaged as a turnkey appliance and was designed to be easy to deploy and manage and to deliver maximum uptime with redundant, hot-swappable components. All components are fully supported by ExaGrid's trained, in-house engineers dedicated to individual accounts.

"With the ExaGrid system, we've gained speed and simplicity. Our backups are now significantly faster than they were in the past, and our processes are now more streamlined," said Johnson.

"We back up a large amount of data each night and our data is always growing. The ExaGrid system has taken the pain out of our backups."

ExaGrid and CommVault Simpana

CommVault Simpana Backup and Recovery software contains extensive capabilities to simplify the management of backup media resources. Simpana software writes backup data to a broad collection of storage devices, including disk as a media target. This ability to write to magnetic disk as a functional equal of all other media types while exploiting the random access nature of the disk media sets Simpana software apart.

Organizations using Simpana can look to ExaGrid as an alternative to tape for nightly backups. ExaGrid sits behind existing backup applications, such as Simpana, providing faster and more reliable backups and restores. In a network running Simpana, 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 deduplication, delivering a disk-based solution that is more cost effective than standard SATA drives. ExaGrid's byte-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 our website www.ExaGrid.com or call us at 1-800-868-6985.

ABOUT EXAGRID

ExaGrid is the leader in cost-effective disk-based backup solutions. A highly scalable system that works with existing backup applications, the ExaGrid system 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 primary and secondary sites to supplement or eliminate offsite tapes with live data repositories or for disaster recovery.

ExaGrid Systems, Inc.

2000 West Park Drive
Westborough, MA 01581

1 800.868.6985
www.ExaGrid.com

