

Saul Ewing Increases Retention, Makes Backups Faster with ExaGrid

Customer Overview

Saul Ewing LLP is a full service law firm with 270 lawyers in nine offices in Pennsylvania, Maryland, New Jersey, Delaware, New York and the District of Columbia. Based in Philadelphia, the firm serves businesses throughout the United States and internationally, including recognizable names in corporate America, exciting start-ups and an array of closely held and privately held companies, as well as nonprofits, governmental and educational entities.

Long Backups, Limited Retention, High Tape Costs with SAN

The IT department at Saul Ewing had been backing up data from its nine offices to a storage area network (SAN) and tape but grappled with long backup times and retention issues on a daily basis.

Due to limited disk space, the firm offloaded its data to tape on a daily basis because it could only keep a day of Exchange data and a week of file system data on the SAN. In all, the firm spent nearly \$2,000 per month on tape. Backup times were also long, with full backups running from Friday night until Monday morning and incremental backups running all night long.

“Our backups took an extremely long time, and once our data was backed up to disk, the tape backups would kick off and they would run constantly during the day. Our monthly tape costs were out of control and restoring data from tape was time consuming and labor intensive,” said Chris McNish, senior systems administrator at Saul Ewing. “We knew we needed a better solution.”

Two-site ExaGrid System Works with Existing Environment, Data De-duplication Maximizes Disk Space and Makes Replication Fly

Saul Ewing decided to purchase a disk-based backup system with data de-duplication and chose a two-site ExaGrid system after looking at several different products on the market. The firm installed an ExaGrid system in its main datacenter in Philadelphia and a second system 20 miles away in its Chesterbook office. The two systems replicate data back and forth for disaster recovery purposes.

“We felt that the ExaGrid system was the most elegant and most efficient solution on the market,” said McNish. “It was easy to install and worked with our existing backup application so there was very little disruption to our environment.”

The ExaGrid systems work alongside Saul Ewing’s existing backup application, CommVault Galaxy™.

Currently, the firm retains two months of data on the systems before the information is archived to tape.

McNish estimates that the firm’s tape expenses have been reduced by 75 percent and weekly full backups are now completed in less than 20 hours.

“The ExaGrid system is definitely cost-effective. ExaGrid’s data de-duplication enables us to maximize our disk space and because of that, we were able to purchase a smaller system. Purchasing the same amount of capacity in straight disk would have cost ten times more, at least,” said McNish. “In addition, since we only have to archive our data to tape once every two months now, we have saved a tremendous amount of money in tape costs.”

In choosing a disk-based backup system, McNish looked closely at different approaches to data de-duplication and evaluated the difference between ExaGrid’s post-process approach and the in-line approach used by other products.

“The one thing that stood out to us was ExaGrid’s post-process approach to data de-duplication. Other solutions used an in-line approach, which de-duplicates data as it is being backed up. ExaGrid’s post-process approach de-duplicates the data after it lands on the system so that backups are more efficient and run as fast as possible,” said McNish.

“The other place where the data de-duplication helps tremendously is in reducing the amount of time it takes to replicate data between our two sites. Because only changes are sent across the network, it’s very efficient and replicating the data between sites takes only about a half hour.”

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. When a second site is used,

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Chris McNish
Sr. Systems Administrator
Saul Ewing LLP



the cost savings are even greater because ExaGrid's byte-level data de-duplication technology moves only changes, requiring minimal WAN bandwidth.

GRID Architecture Ensures Easy Growth path, Customer Support Helps Keel System Running Smoothly

Because Saul Ewing's data grows quickly, McNish needed to ensure that the firm's backup system was scalable and could be expanded to handle more data. 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.

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McNish has also found ExaGrid's customer support knowledgeable and proactive. ExaGrid's industry-leading customer support center 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.

"We have a dedicated support engineer who is familiar with our installation and knowledgeable about the ExaGrid system and about backup processes in general. He's proactive and extremely responsive whenever we call. I have dealt with lots of support organizations in the past, and ExaGrid's is among the best," said McNish.

Since installing the ExaGrid system, Saul Ewing has been able to reduce its backup times, increase retention, improve disaster recovery capabilities and reduce costs.

"The ExaGrid system has significantly improved our backups.

We no longer have to worry about offloading our data to tape on a daily basis and our backups are fast and efficient. Restores are also easier because we no longer have to recover information from tape, which saves us lots of time," said McNish.

ExaGrid and CommVault Galaxy

CommVault Galaxy Backup and Recovery software contains extensive capabilities to simplify the management of backup media resources. Galaxy 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 Galaxy software apart.

Organizations using Galaxy can look to ExaGrid as an alternative to tape for nightly backups. ExaGrid sits behind existing backup applications, such as Galaxy, providing faster and more reliable backups and restores. In a network running Galaxy, 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 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 and a second site 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 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 and secondary sites to supplement or eliminate offsite tapes with a live data repository or for disaster recovery.

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