ASCAP Sings the Praises of Using ExaGrid Over Tape in Collocated Environment

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>
> **James Lee**
> **Manager of Technical Services**
> **ASCAP**

Key Benefits:

- Multi-site system easily supports virtual Veeam backups
- Adaptive data deduplication reduces data, requiring a smaller footprint
- Scale-out architecture accommodates growing data and increased retention requirements
- System is monitored by an ExaGrid support engineer

Customer Overview

American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) is a professional membership association of more than 550,000 U.S. composers, songwriters, and music publishers, representing more than 10 millions copyrighted works. ASCAP's mission is to license and promote the music of its members and foreign affiliates, obtain fair compensation for the public performance of their works and to distribute the royalties that it collects based upon those performances. ASCAP has pioneered the efficient licensing of that music to hundreds of thousands of enterprises who use it to add value to their business - from bars, restaurants and retail, to radio, TV and cable, to internet, mobile services and more.

Organization Chooses ExaGrid Over other Competitors

ASCAP has a large IT environment consisting of an Oracle database, physical servers running AIX, and hundreds of virtualized Linux and Windows-based servers. The organization's IT department had been backing up to tape, but began to consider a disk-based approach when the decision was made to move its datacenter to a collocation facility several hundred miles away from its main datacenter.

"Backing up to tape requires a high level of human intervention, whether it's to deal with a jammed tape or to rotate media, or to perform a restore," said James Lee, ASCAP's manager of technical services. "When we began planning the move to a collocated environment, we decided we needed a backup solution that would be as hands-off as possible, so tape simply wasn't an option."

ASCAP decided to implement the ExaGrid system after looking at several competing products, including an EMC Data Domain solution. The multi-site ExaGrid system works with Veeam Backup & Replication to back up and protect ASCAP's valuable business information. Data is backed up to the ExaGrid system and replicated for disaster recovery each night.

Lee said that choosing ExaGrid was the right decision. "The ExaGrid solution came in at a significantly lower price point than other topline competitors," he said. "We've been happy with the ExaGrid system, and it's a good solution for a lights-out environment. We don't have to call the collocation facility and get them to send

an operator out to our room, unlock the cage, and deal with our backup solution for things like jammed tapes. We're able to deal with our backups remotely, and we're confident that our data is being backed up correctly each night."

Data Deduplication Ratios as High as 40:1

Data reduction is particularly important for ASCAP, because its retention policies dictate that some data needs to be kept for as long as seven years. ExaGrid's zone-level data deduplication effectively reduces data so that it requires a smaller footprint.

"ExaGrid's zone-level deduplication does a good job at reducing our data," said Lee. "It's particularly impressive with SQL data, where we're currently seeing deduplication ratios as high as 40:1."

ExaGrid combines standard compression along with zone-level 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. With ExaGrid disk-based backup appliances, backups are written directly to a disk landing zone, avoiding inline processing, ensuring the highest possible backup performance resulting in the shortest backup window.

Adaptive deduplication performs deduplication and replication in parallel with backups while providing full system resources to the backups for the shortest backup window. Available system cycles are utilized to perform

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deduplication and offsite replication for an optimal recovery point at the disaster recovery site. Once complete, the onsite data is protected and immediately available in its full undeduplicated form for fast restores, VM Instant Recoveries and tape copies while the offsite data is ready for disaster recovery.

Scalability to Grow

Lee said that ExaGrid's GRID architecture has made it easy to expand the system to accommodate growing data or to handle increased retention requirements.

ExaGrid uses a GRID-based configuration, so when the system needs to expand, additional appliances are attached to the GRID, bringing with them not only additional disk but also processing power, memory, and bandwidth. This type of configuration allows the system to maintain all the aspects of performance as the amount of data grows. In addition, as new ExaGrid appliances are added to the GRID, the ExaGrid automatically load balances available capacity, maintaining a virtual pool of storage that is shared across the GRID.

"Our data grows quickly and it's a fairly easy process to add an ExaGrid appliance into the GRID," he said.

Assigned Customer Support Engineer

The ExaGrid customer support engineer assigned to ASCAP's account has gone above and beyond to ensure that the system is working, Lee said.

"Our support engineer has been very responsive and has gone the extra mile for us. For example, we had an issue initially with backing up our AIX systems. ExaGrid support actually went ahead and purchased an AIX unit, worked with it to determine the root of the problem, and sent it to us for testing in our environment," Lee said. "There's a high level of commitment from them to identify a problem and work to make it right."

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

According to Lee, "One of the key reasons we began looking for a disk-based system was because we needed 'lights-out' backups in a collocated environment. The ExaGrid system's best feature is that it doesn't require a lot of maintenance – and it's silent, so sometimes we forget about it. The other nice thing is that the entire system is monitored by our ExaGrid support engineer. For example, if a drive fails, he notifies us and sends out another one. We don't have to think about maintenance, and that's critical in a collocated environment."

ExaGrid and Veeam

The combination of ExaGrid's and Veeam's industry-leading virtual server data protection solutions allows customers to utilize Veeam Backup & Replication in VMware, vSphere, and Microsoft Hyper-V virtual environments on ExaGrid's disk-based backup system. This combination provides fast backups and efficient data storage as well as replication to an offsite location for disaster recovery.

The ExaGrid system fully leverages Veeam Backup & Replication's built-in backup to disk capabilities and ExaGrid's zone-level data deduplication for additional data reduction (and cost reduction) over standard disk solutions. Customers can use Veeam Backup & Replication's built-in source-side deduplication in concert with ExaGrid's disk-based backup system with zone-level deduplication to further shrink backups.

Intelligent Data Protection

ExaGrid's turnkey disk-based backup system combines high quality disk drives with zone-level data deduplication, delivering a disk-based solution that is far more cost effective than simply backing up to straight disk. ExaGrid's patented zone-level deduplication reduces the disk space needed by a range of 10:1 to 50:1 by storing only the unique bytes across backups instead of redundant data. Adaptive deduplication performs deduplication and replication in parallel with backups while providing full system resources to the backups for the shortest backup window. Adaptive deduplication delivers the fastest backups, and as data grows, only ExaGrid avoids expanding backup windows by adding full appliances in a GRID. ExaGrid's unique landing zone keeps a full copy of the most recent backup on disk, delivering the fastest restores, instant VM recovery, "Instant DR," and fast tape copy. And, as data grows, ExaGrid saves up to 50% in total system costs compared to competitive solutions by avoiding costly "forklift" upgrades.

About ExaGrid

ExaGrid provides backup storage with a unique landing zone and scale-out architecture. The landing zone provides for the fastest backups, restores and instant VM recoveries. The scale-out architecture includes full appliances in a scalable GRID and provides for a fixed-length backup window as data grows, eliminating expensive forklift upgrades. Learn more at **www.exagrid.com**.