

All Star International Relies on ExaGrid for Faster Backups, Improved Disaster Recovery

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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James Suvanaket
Senior Systems Engineer
All Star International

Customer Overview

All Star International, a wholly-owned subsidiary of WSI, offers diverse service lines spanning aerospace support services, facilities operations and maintenance, military family housing maintenance, renovation and privatization, logistics, construction, fleet maintenance and integrated facilities maintenance. With gross annual sales of approximately \$200 million, All Star has more than 1,200 personnel operating from corporate headquarters in San Diego, California and regional offices in Fort Worth, Texas and Kaiserslautern, Germany. Founded in 1983, All Star has successfully completed more than 400 successful government and commercial contracts valued at more than \$2 billion.

Frustration with Long Backup Times, Cumbersome Tape

The IT staff at All Star Maintenance had been backing up the company's data to a dual tape drive for years, but long backup times and the daily challenges of managing and relying on tape eventually led the firm to search for a new solution.

"Our backup times were getting longer and longer and we were constantly pushing up against our backup window. Our backups need to be completed by the time our users start working or our network slows down to a crawl," said James Suvanaket, senior systems engineer for All Star International. "Restores were challenging, too. Our tapes are stored off-site, so before we could even go through the restore process, we had to get the tapes here. It was so frustrating. I can't even count the number of times that we had restore requests right after the courier left with our tapes. We needed a solution that would enable us to back up our data each and every night within our backup window and we needed better access to our data for restores."

Suvanaket said that after considering a variety of factors, All Star decided that a disk-based system would provide the flexibility and functionality the company needed.

"Disk-based was the only way to go. We needed to reduce our backup window, improve restores and retention, and reduce our reliance on tape," said Suvanaket. "We did a fairly thorough evaluation and brought products from Data Domain, Quantum and ExaGrid into our datacenter to compare them. The ExaGrid was the clear winner based on its approach to data deduplication, scalability, price and performance."

Two-site ExaGrid System Works with Existing Infrastructure, Automatically Replicates Data for Disaster Recovery

All Star purchased a two-site ExaGrid system with data deduplication to work alongside the company's existing backup application, Symantec's Backup Exec. One system was installed in the company's San Diego datacenter and the second was deployed in its regional office in Fort Worth. Data is automatically replicated each night between the two systems in case it is needed for disaster recovery.

"The ExaGrid system works beautifully with Backup Exec and with our existing network. In fact, it's safe to say that Backup Exec works far better with the ExaGrid than with our old tape solution," said Suvanaket. "The ExaGrid was also easy to set up. I think we had it up and running in less than 15 minutes, which is really amazing."

Suvanaket said that All Star's IT staff spent a considerable amount of time evaluating the data deduplication approaches of the different products.

"We compared ExaGrid's post process approach to data deduplication with the inline approach offered by other vendors. The ExaGrid delivers faster backups because the data is deduped after it lands on the ExaGrid. We can also make a tape of the deduplicated data right away if we need to. With the ExaGrid, we have a high level of flexibility," he said. "The ExaGrid also came out better in terms of price/performance."



Faster Backups, Deduplication Rates of 27:1

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.

"Since installing the ExaGrid system, our backups are running extremely fast and we have no trouble completing our backups every night. We've been averaging 27:1 deduplication and we have nearly 27TB of data on the system and ready to restore," said Suvanaket. "It's wonderful to have two or even three months of data available to us. We no longer have to deal with the rotation of 30 plus tapes on a weekly basis and the restore process is extremely fast because the data is available right on our network."

Scalability

"One of the major decision points in choosing the ExaGrid was its scalability. With the ExaGrid, we can add capacity by plugging in additional units to the Grid. Some of the other products we looked at were 'rip and replace,'" said Suvanaket. "That high level of scalability, plus the ability to add a second unit for data replication, was huge for us."

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 100TB 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.

Exceptional Customer Support

"ExaGrid's support is exceptional and it ranks up there with the best in the industry. We have a dedicated customer support engineer who is always available to us and he's extremely knowledgeable," said Suvanaket. "Our assigned engineer is great. We had some issues at first when we tried to set up our replication between San Diego and Fort Worth but he stayed with us and worked many hours to be sure that our issues and questions were resolved. We're extremely pleased with ExaGrid's support, to say the least."

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 dedicated to individual accounts. The system is fully supported and was designed and manufactured for maximum uptime with redundant, hot-swappable components.

"The ExaGrid is a solid, very well engineered system and it's very reliable. We don't have to worry about the integrity of our backup data anymore and we're confident that our data is backed up correctly each and every night. With the ExaGrid, we have months of data at our fingertips ready to restore. It's a terrific system," he said.

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.

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.

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.

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