

American TV Watches Backup Windows Shrink with ExaGrid Disk-based Backup

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Matt Harris
Technology Integrator
American TV

Customer Overview

Based in Madison, Wisconsin, American TV is a retailer of furniture, consumer electronics and appliances. With 15 stores in Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri and Michigan, American TV generates total sales of \$450 million and employs over 2,000 people.

Growing Backup Window Leads to Search for New Solution

As a growing retailer, American TV needed to streamline its backup processes and shorten its backup windows. The IT staff at American TV was protecting its data by performing nightly backups with its tape library system. Each night, the staff created two tapes for each server, one that was kept on-site for restores, and another tape that was sent to a secure location for disaster recovery. In total, backups took approximately 9 hours, and the time it took to complete all of the backups was growing.

“Our nightly backups had grown to about 9 hours, but our month end backups were creating a bigger problem. The month end normally took our whole backup window, and we were starting to miss backups because our windows would close,” said Matt Harris, technology integrator at American TV.

The cost of tapes needed was also growing, and the prospect of adding new tape libraries led American TV to look for new, more effective ways to protect its data.

“The company is growing and we had started going through tapes like water. We knew that if we continued to spend money on tapes and additional tape libraries, we’d still have the same headaches of tape as well as growing backup windows,” said Harris.

ExaGrid Eases Backup Window, Saves on Tape Costs

American TV implemented ExaGrid’s disk-based backup system to streamline its operations and shorten its backup window. American TV uses ExaGrid along with its existing backup application, Veritas NetBackup™.

Now, instead of running its backups to tape at night, the IT department runs disk-to-disk at night with ExaGrid, and then copies the data from ExaGrid to tape during the day using ExaGrid as a Disk Staging Storage Unit (DSSU) through NetBackup.

“Our backup window has already been cut in half, and our month end backups are now completed well within the timeframe,” said Harris. “With ExaGrid, we have cut our tape costs and we can now be sure that our backups have been completed every night.”

Another issue for the IT department at American TV was finding the time to perform administrative work on its servers because the servers were constantly being backed up.

“Backups were taking all night long and users kept the servers busy during the day, so it was hard to find time to perform routine maintenance,” said Harris. “It was very inconvenient. Because our backups are so much faster with ExaGrid, we have more time for administration.”



American TV backs up approximately 2 TB of data each night, but because ExaGrid's byte-level data de-duplication technology stores only the changes from backup to backup instead of storing full file copies, backups and restores are more efficient. ExaGrid's byte-level data de-duplication technology reduces the amount of disk space needed to at least 20 to 1.

"We are backing up about a 2 TB of data each night, and we have 40 days of backups on our ExaGrid system," said Derrus Ward, network administrator at American TV. "Because ExaGrid's data reduction technology saves only the changes from backup to backup, we can put significantly more data on our system."

Ward said that restore times have also dramatically improved. "Restores are significantly faster. Instead of having to request a tape back from our off-site facility, we just push a button and the file is restored," he said.

"I was surprised how easily the ExaGrid worked with our UNIX servers. ExaGrid's interface was very self-explanatory and made the system setup easy. You simply set up a share, check it as UNIX and it's done. ExaGrid takes care of all of the backend work," said Harris.

ExaGrid and NetBackup

Symantec's Veritas NetBackup delivers high performance data protection that scales to protect the largest UNIX, Windows, Linux and NetWare environments. With complete protection from remote office to data center to vault, NetBackup offers a single console for all backup and recovery operations.

Organizations using Veritas NetBackup can look to ExaGrid as an alternative to tape for nightly backups. ExaGrid sits behind existing backup applications, such as NetBackup, providing faster and more reliable backups and restores. In a network running NetBackup, 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.

Fast, Reliable Disk-based 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 to at least 20 to 1, and 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.

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

About ExaGrid Systems, Inc.

Customers worldwide depend on ExaGrid Systems to solve their backup problems—effectively and permanently. ExaGrid's disk-based, scale-out GRID architecture adjusts to increasing backup demands due to constantly growing data volumes. It is the only solution that combines compute with capacity as well as a unique landing zone to permanently shorten backup windows and eliminate expensive forklift upgrades. Learn more at www.exagrid.com.