

CTDI Installs ExaGrid to Establish Offsite Storage that Matches Long-Term Data Growth

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Eric Wertman
Systems Administrator

Key Benefits:

- As CTDI's data has grown, its ExaGrid system has easily scaled, allowing for more capacity
- ExaGrid enables replication between CTDI sites
- Restoring data is 'instantaneous' from ExaGrid's landing zone; 'much easier' process than tape
- ExaGrid support is 'responsive and knowledgeable'

Customer Overview

Founded in 1975, Communications Test Design, Inc. (CTDI) is a full-service, global engineering, repair and logistics company providing best-cost solutions to the communications industry. CTDI's customers include the major wireline and wireless telecom carriers, cable service providers, and major OEMs from around the world. CTDI maintains its corporate headquarters in West Chester, Pennsylvania, and supports an expanding customer base with more than 14,000 employees in over 90 facilities worldwide.

Establishing Offsite Storage for Data Protection

CTDI had been backing up its data to LTO tape drives, using Micro Focus Data Protector backup software. The company purchased an ExaGrid system in 2010 to offset its tape backups as well as establish backups in an offsite facility. "We were moving into a remote co-location facility, a place where we really wouldn't be able to deal with tapes on a regular basis. We needed something that was going to be relatively maintenance-free in terms of physical access," explained Eric Wertman, the systems administrator at CTDI.

"Installation of the ExaGrid system was straightforward. We physically racked the appliances and our ExaGrid support engineer helped with the rest. Our remote site is actually the primary backup site and it replicates to our local site," said Wertman.

The ExaGrid system is easy to install and use, and works seamlessly with all of the most frequently used backup applications, so an organization can seamlessly retain its investment in existing applications and processes. In addition, ExaGrid appliances can be used at primary and secondary sites to supplement or eliminate offsite tapes with live data repositories for disaster recovery.

'Impressive' Deduplication and 'Instantaneous' Restores

Much of CTDI's data consists of Oracle databases, and Wertman backs up the data in daily incrementals and weekly fulls, while



saving a recovery point every six hours. CTDI keeps retention of six weeks' worth of backups, and Wertman is pleased with the data deduplication achieved with the ExaGrid system. "On average, we get a 10:1 deduplication ratio, which I consider to be very good considering it's mostly database-type data. Generally speaking, that type of data doesn't dedupe very well, so I've been impressed with that."

Wertman has found that restoring data is quick and easy thanks to ExaGrid's unique landing zone. "The process of restoring data from our ExaGrid system is certainly much easier than restoring from tape. We still use tape today, and most of the time I'll need to have a tape brought in from offsite, which is a bit of hassle. There's no real work involved in finding the data that you need to restore from an ExaGrid system because it's right there—it's instantaneous."

ExaGrid writes backups directly to a disk landing zone, avoiding inline processing and ensuring the highest possible backup performance, which results in the shortest backup window. "Adaptive" deduplication

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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 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 unduplicated form for fast restores, VM Instant Recoveries, and tape copies while the offsite data is ready for disaster recovery.

ExaGrid System Evolves Over the Years to Adapt to Data Growth

As CTDI's data has grown, Wertman has expanded his existing ExaGrid system with new appliances, and eventually decided to upgrade CTDI's ExaGrid system for a model with greater capacity as well as encryption. "Our original ExaGrid installation was small and as we've grown, we've added more appliances to our system. The account team has been great over the years. My account manager checks in with me regularly to see how everything's going in my environment, and has helped when I've bought new appliances to expand the system. It's been nice to have such a personal experience with a team that knows our environment.

"Eventually, we decided to purchase a model with greater capacity and one that featured encryption. It was a simple process, very similar to installing the first system we had purchased. My ExaGrid support engineer helped me through the setup, which was as simple as giving the system IP addresses and configuring the shares," said Wertman.

The ExaGrid system can easily scale to accommodate data growth. ExaGrid's computing software makes the system highly scalable, and when plugged into a switch, appliances of any size or age can be mixed and matched in a single system with capacities of up to a 2PB full backup plus retention and an ingest rate of up to 432TB per hour. Once virtualized, they appear as a single system to the backup server, and load balancing of all data across servers is automatic.

About ExaGrid

ExaGrid provides hyper-converged secondary storage (HCSS) for backup with a unique landing zone and scale-out architecture. The landing zone enables the fastest backups, restores, and instant VM recoveries. The scale-out architecture includes full appliances in a scalable system and ensures a fixed-length backup window as data grows, eliminating expensive and disruptive forklift upgrades. Learn more at www.exagrid.com.

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Well-Supported System is the 'Easiest Piece of the Puzzle'

Wertman enjoys working with his assigned ExaGrid support engineer. "One of my favorite things about using ExaGrid has been working with the support team. We've worked with a few ExaGrid engineers over the years, and they've always been responsive and knowledgeable. My assigned engineer helps us with updates and replacements, and has worked with us through some minor issues. It's been a great experience."

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.

Wertman appreciates how easy it is to manage the ExaGrid system. "The simplicity of the ExaGrid system is the best thing about it. It's the easiest piece of the puzzle that I have right now. It hasn't required anything from me since the initial setup, and that's what I want in a piece of equipment—something I don't need to spend much time looking at."

ExaGrid and Micro Focus Data Protector

Efficient disk-based backup requires close integration between the backup software and the disk device. That is the advantage delivered by the partnership between Micro Focus Data Protector and ExaGrid. Together, Micro Focus Data Protector and ExaGrid provide a cost-effective disk-based backup solution that scales to meet the needs of demanding enterprise environments. ExaGrid also supports the ability to replicate Micro Focus Data Protector backups to a second site for offsite disaster recovery protection.

The combination of ExaGrid's disk-based backup with deduplication appliance with Micro Focus Data Protector backup enables customers to significantly shrink their backup windows, improve recovery times and cost-effectively protect more data on secure, reliable disk.



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