

City of Kentwood Modernizes Backups with ExaGrid

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Bill Dudgeon
Information Systems Manager
City of Kentwood, Michigan

Customer Overview

The City of Kentwood, Michigan has a population of over 45,000 residents, making it the second most populous suburb of Grand Rapids. Originally founded as Paris Township in 1839, it was incorporated as a city in 1967. Kentwood is located approximately 30 miles east of Lake Michigan and is 21 square miles in size.

Increasing Data Volumes Stress Old Tape System, Create Unreliable Backup Process

The IT department for the City of Kentwood supports approximately 270 users spanning all departments city-wide, including City Hall and the City's phone systems. The IT department supports every IT function of the fire and police departments, including in-car and interview video, as well as sewer system video for DPW.

According to Bill Dudgeon, information systems manager for the City of Kentwood, "Prior to implementing the ExaGrid, we were backing up some data to LTO tapes but primarily relying on snapshots and shadow copies. We really weren't 'backing up.' We'd keep SQL databases, Exchange, and a few files but not very much at all. We needed to upgrade our tape library, and I wanted to back up to disk, so I kept searching for a good disk backup option for the City."

The City had a three-week tape rotation stored off site and one monthly for 12 months. Their goal was a 30-day retention period other than for certain data like public safety or other data sets that had more stringent retention requirements.

Post-Process Data Deduplication Delivers High Performance

Dudgeon wanted a solution that would provide data deduplication while staying well within their desired backup window. "I knew that my NetApp would do data

deduplication, but I wanted something that would work with NetApp to produce less of a footprint for the 5TB of data that I was backing up. ExaGrid met both of these goals."

The City of Kentwood is seeing a deduplication ratio on average of 10:1. Dudgeon prefers the post-process data deduplication to the in-line approach used by other vendors. He has experienced a huge reduction in backup window. "Throughput with the ExaGrid is absolutely phenomenal! It's blowing me away!" When Dudgeon ran two tape backup jobs, it would consume most of the evening, starting around 5:00 p.m. and completing at 2:00 a.m. He can now run five backup jobs simultaneously, and some of those jobs are taking very little time at all.

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.

Scalability, Simplicity, Outstanding Customer Support

The ExaGrid system was designed with scalability in mind, so as the City's backup demands increase, the system can be easily expanded to accommodate 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 100TB full backup plus retention. Once virtualized, they appear as a single system to the backup server, and load balancing of all data across appliances is automatic.

"One of the things I really like about ExaGrid is the method of support," said Dudgeon. "I get the same support person all the time, and he's familiar with my environment. I'm very impressed that my support engineer is certified in Symantec Backup Exec and is able to help me with Backup Exec issues. I can't say enough good about the support I've received; it's been phenomenal!"

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.

"I used to worry about whether we had enough tapes in-house. I used to have to pay someone overtime on holidays to come in and change tapes, and if no one was available, I had to do it. With ExaGrid, you set the backups to happen and they do." On average, Dudgeon estimates that he saves five hours per week, and for a municipality with lean IT resources, that's a lot of time to be able to allocate to other priorities. In addition, Dudgeon estimates a savings of \$12,000 per year by not using tape and tape storage.

ExaGrid System Yields Peace of Mind

The numerous favored features of Dudgeon's include the post-process deduplication, not having to rely on tape anymore, general ease of administration, and foremost is the technical support that he values most. However, not as quantifiable is the peace of mind that Dudgeon says he feels now using the ExaGrid for his backups. He says of tape, "If it's been sitting around or it's a little too old or past its prime, it may never yield

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.

to me what I put on it. I don't have that lack of confidence with backing up to the ExaGrid."

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.