

Concorde Tests the Market for Disk-Based Backup Solutions, Chooses ExaGrid for Speed, Scalability, and Disaster Recovery

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Michael Karolitzky
Chief Technical Officer
Concorde

Customer Overview

Since 1983, Philadelphia-based Concorde has established itself as an industry leader in all facets of employment screening and health services, including drug and alcohol testing, background screening, and occupational health services.

24-Hour Backups, Tape Management Increasingly Problematic

Concorde's IT staff had been backing up the company's data to tape, but long backup times and dealing with cumbersome tape had taken their toll. Finally, the company decided to look for a disk-based backup solution in an effort to speed backups, improve disaster recovery, and streamline day-to-day backup operations.

"Our backups were running 24-plus hours, and we were tired of dealing with tape. To us, tape was the weakest link in our backup infrastructure," said Michael Karolitzky, chief technical officer at Concorde. "We began looking for a disk-based backup solution with data deduplication that could be deployed for both primary backup and disaster recovery. After looking at systems from Symantec, CommVault, EMC Data Domain and Quantum, we decided on the ExaGrid system based on its approach to data deduplication and its scalability."

Concorde installed an ExaGrid system in its primary datacenter with a second offsite system planned in the future for disaster recovery. The ExaGrid system backs up all of Concorde's data, including imaging and scans, the company's large SQL server, its Hyper-V cluster, and its storage-area network. The ExaGrid system works in conjunction with the company's existing backup application, Symantec Backup Exec.

Backup Times Cut in Half, Data Deduplication Maximizes Disk Space

"We liked that the ExaGrid system backs data up to a landing zone before it deduplicates the data so that backup jobs run as quickly as possible. Our backup times have gone from 24 hours to less than 12 hours, which represents a significant improvement for us," said Karolitzky. "The ExaGrid system does a great job at reducing our data so that we can maximize retention."

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 zone-level data deduplication technology moves only changes, requiring minimal WAN bandwidth.

Fast Installation, Experienced and Proactive Customer Support

Karolitzky worked with the ExaGrid customer support engineer assigned to the Concorde account to set up and configure the system.



“The installation process was pretty straightforward, and we were able to get the system up and running in one night,” he said. “All in all, it’s an easy system to manage, and it’s significantly reduced the amount of time I spend on backups. Restores are incredibly easy with the ExaGrid system. With tape, we had to recall the correct tapes, get them back into our datacenter, load them into the drives and find the correct file. Now, I can restore a file with a few mouse clicks.”

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.

“Our ExaGrid customer support engineer has been wonderful to work with. He’s incredibly responsive and I never hesitate to call him if I have a question or issue,” said Karolitzky. “He’s proactive, too. He keeps an eye on our system and sends an email message if he suspects there might be a problem, and then he gets right on the phone with me and we get the issue resolved. He’s also worked hard to tweak the system to raise our deduplication ratios. I love the fact that we have a dedicated resource.”

GRID Architecture Ensures Scalability

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 130TB 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.

“Our data grows quickly, and we like the fact that we won’t have to perform a forklift upgrade when the time comes to expand the system,” said Karolitzky. “The ExaGrid system has given us the speed, reduced backup times, and ease of use we were looking for in a backup solution.”

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.

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.

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

Intelligent Data Protection

ExaGrid’s turnkey disk-based backup system combines high quality SATA drives with zone-level data deduplication, delivering a disk-based solution that is more cost effective than standard SATA drives. ExaGrid’s zone-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.

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