

# ExaGrid Gets High Marks for Backup at Dublin City University

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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John L. Doyle  
IT Specialist  
Dublin City University

## Customer Overview

Dublin City University (DCU) is located on an 85 acre campus three miles north of the River Liffey in the center of Dublin. DCU was initially established in 1980 to fulfill a national requirement for a highly-trained workforce with skills in the areas of business, science and electronics, computer technology, communications and languages and as an agent for change in its local community. It was awarded university status in 1989, and now offers over 80 programs divided almost equally between undergraduate and postgraduate courses. Postgraduate research supervision is provided on a broad range of subject areas across all disciplines, including technology, engineering, business, communications, humanities, science and health. Nearly 10,000 students are registered at DCU.

## Opportunity to Upgrade from Tape Leads to ExaGrid

When DCU needed to upgrade its tape library to handle its growing data protection requirements, the university's IT staff decided to look at various backup solutions on the market and chose to move its backups to disk.

"We were at the point where we needed to upgrade our tape technology and licenses to handle more data," said John L. Doyle, IT specialist at Dublin City University. "Moving to disk gave us the ability to reduce our reliance on tape, improve disaster recovery efforts and shorten our backup times."

After evaluating several options, the university chose a two-site disk-based backup system from ExaGrid. One system is installed in the university's main datacenter in Dublin, and the second will be located offsite for disaster recovery. Data will be replicated between the two systems in case it is needed for disaster recovery. The ExaGrid systems work alongside DCU's existing backup application, Symantec's Veritas NetBackup.

## Backup Times Dramatically Reduced, Instantaneous Restores

Since installing the ExaGrid system, DCU has seen its backup times significantly reduced.

Nightly incremental backups have cut from ten hours to five hours, and weekly full backup times have been reduced from 48 hours to nearly 10 hours.

"Moving to the ExaGrid system has made a big difference in the efficiency of our backups. Our backups were taking way too long and we were close to running up against our backup window all the time. Now, the backups are completed in record time each and every night," said Doyle. "The replication works beautifully and it's extremely fast. It's typically finished by the time we arrive in the morning." Doyle has also noticed an improvement in restore times.

"With the ExaGrid, restores are nearly instantaneous. There's really no comparison to tape, it's just a huge step forward," he said.

## Data Deduplication Maximizes Disk Space

ExaGrid's built-in data deduplication reduces the amount of data DCU stores so that disk space on the system can be maximized. Since installing the ExaGrid system, DCU has seen its data deduplication rates improve by the week.

"ExaGrid's data deduplication technology is wonderful. It's automatic and works completely in the background, and it's amazing to see how much data we can



actually store. It's a fraction of what we back up," said Doyle. "The system is still relatively new, so our deduplication rates are still going up. We're impressed."

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. ExaGrid is cost effective when a two-site system is used because its data deduplication technology moves only changes between sites, minimizing the amount of bandwidth needed.

## Intuitive and Easy to Use, Responsive Customer Support

Doyle worked with ExaGrid's customer support team to install DCU's ExaGrid system. Once the system was in place, ExaGrid's support engineer accessed the system remotely to assist with configuration and training.

ExaGrid comes packaged as a turnkey appliance and was designed to be easy to deploy and manage and to deliver maximum uptime with redundant, hot-swappable components. All components are fully supported by ExaGrid's trained, in-house engineers dedicated to individual accounts.

"From the very beginning, we've had a good experience with ExaGrid's customer support team. Our support engineer is knowledgeable and responsive, and we really like the fact that we have someone dedicated to our account," said John. "We had an optimization challenge early in our ExaGrid deployment, our support engineer was able to access the system remotely and address the problem right away. ExaGrid shipped out new components and our support engineer, remotely, upgraded the system. We couldn't have asked for more."

Doyle also finds ExaGrid's user interface easy to use. "ExaGrid's user interface is intuitive and it provides lots of useful data and reports," said Doyle. "The whole system is easy to use."

## Scalability for the Future

The ability to scale for future data growth was something DCU considered in their purchase decision. In the past, the IT staff at DCU had struggled to keep up with backup demands using tape, so system scalability was critical.

"Our data is growing quickly and we need to be prepared to scale the system to accommodate more information. ExaGrid's

GRID architecture will enable us to expand the system easily should the need arise," said Doyle. "The ExaGrid served our immediate need to back up more data, improved our disaster recovery capabilities and made our backup processes more efficient. It should serve us well for the foreseeable future."

The ExaGrid system can easily be scaled to meet increased demand. 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 60TB 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.

## ExaGrid and NetBackup

Symantec's Veritas NetBackup delivers high performance data protection that scales to protect the largest UNIX, Windows, Linux, OS X and NetWare environments. With complete protection from remote office to 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.

## 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.

**For more information about ExaGrid, please visit us at [www.exagrid.com](http://www.exagrid.com) or call us at 1-800-868-6985.**