Georgia Crown Distributing Doubles Data but Cuts Backup Times by 65% with ExaGrid System

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>
> **David Brown**
> **Systems Analyst**
> **Georgia Crown Distributing**

Key Benefits:

- Backup times significantly reduced
- Data is readily available for quick restores
- Daily reporting provides backup job status, reduces management time
- Scaling the system to accommodate more data was 'easy and straightforward'

Customer Overview

Georgia Crown Distributing Co. is a full service beverage distributor that sells imported and domestic spirits, wines, beers, and specialty products as well as bottled water with wholesale operations in Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee.

Move to Virtualization Led to Exploding Data Growth, Long Backups

Georgia Crown had been backing up its physical servers to disk and then to tape, but when the firm decided to virtualize, its data increased rapidly and backup times grew to nearly 19 hours a day.

"Once we started going down the virtual path, our data grew quickly and we had a hard time keeping up with it. We started with five virtual servers and before we knew it, we had 25 with our data spiraling out of control," said David Brown, systems analyst for Georgia Crown.

ExaGrid Delivers Tight Integration with vRanger, Data Deduplication to Reduce Amount of Data Stored

Initially, the firm's IT staff decided to purchase additional disk along with software designed to reduce redundant data; however, the solution didn't meet expectations. After doing some research, Georgia Crown decided to install the ExaGrid system along with Dell vRanger.

"We've been very happy with the ExaGrid-vRanger combination. The two products work hand-in-hand and are tightly integrated," said Brown. "We were also impressed with its approach to data deduplication. With the ExaGrid, the data is first backed up to a landing zone and then deduplicated, so backup jobs fly."

ExaGrid combines standard compression along with zone-level 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 the changes from backup to backup, requiring minimal WAN bandwidth.

Backup Times Reduced Despite Significant Data Growth

Brown said that Georgia Crown's backup times have been reduced from 19 hours to 6.5 hours, despite the fact that the firm's data has doubled since the system was installed.

"Our backup speeds are extremely impressive, especially in light of the fact that our data continues to increase," he said. "We're saving time in other ways, too. For example, we can restore data with the touch of a button instead of having to deal with tape. Our data is right on the system and available to us at any time. We've gotten to the point where we don't even think about backups or restores."

EXAGRID™

Easy Management and Administration, Top Notch Support

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 worked with our ExaGrid support engineer to set the system up and found the install process to be simple and straightforward," Brown said. "It's also easy to manage. The user interface is intuitive, and I get reports each day with detailed information on our backup jobs, so all I have to do is scan the report and I'm done."

Brown said he has a good relationship with the customer support engineer assigned to Georgia Crown's account.

"To us, good customer support is critical," he said. "We've been extremely pleased with ExaGrid's team. Our ExaGrid support engineer is proactive and easy to reach, and he has a high level of knowledge about the system.

GRID Architecture Ensures Smooth Scalability

ExaGrid uses a GRID-based configuration, where each appliance contains processing power, memory, bandwidth, and disk. When the system needs to expand, additional appliance nodes are attached to the GRID, bringing with them additional processing power, memory, bandwidth, and disk. This type of configuration allows the system to maintain all the aspects of performance as the amount of data grows, and you are only paying for the amount of processing power, memory and bandwidth as you need it. In addition, as new ExaGrid appliance nodes are added to the GRID, the ExaGrid automatically load balances available capacity, maintaining a virtual pool of storage that is shared across the GRID.

"Our backup data is constantly growing. ExaGrid's GRID architecture gives us an extra level of comfort because we're confident that we'll be able to scale the system up to meet increased backup demands," said Brown. "We've already added onto the system and found the process incredibly easy and straightforward. I simply plugged in the additional unit, called into ExaGrid support, gave our engineer the IP addresses to complete the configuration, and it was up and running."

Brown said that having the ExaGrid system in place has helped Georgia Crown reduce backup times and increased his confidence in the quality of the firm's backups.

"With the ExaGrid system, we were able to reduce our backup times from 19 hours to 6.5 hours, even though our data doubled. It's also reduced the amount of time we spend worrying about backups. We've been very happy with the solution," he said.

ExaGrid and Dell vRanger

Dell's vRanger solution offers full image level and differential backups of virtual machines to enable faster, more efficient storage and recovery of virtual machines. ExaGrid's disk-based backup systems serve as the backup target for these virtual machine images, using high-performance, post-process data deduplication to dramatically reduce the disk storage capacity required for backups versus standard disk storage.

Intelligent Data Protection

ExaGrid's turnkey disk-based backup system combines high quality disk drives with zone-level data deduplication, delivering a disk-based solution that is far more cost effective than simply backing up to straight disk. 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 backing up to straight disk. 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.

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