

Polk Audio Chooses ExaGrid over Data Domain for Faster Backups and Restores

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Melanie Szwitich
Director of Information Technology and Direct Sales Operations
Polk Audio

Key Benefits:

- Weekly full backup window reduced from over 30 hours to 6.5
- Scalability provides Polk with investment protection and prevents obsolescence; 2nd site will be added for DR
- Concurrent backups help keep backup window short
- System flexibility enables Polk to pick and choose to do fulls and incrementals based on weekly business needs

Customer Overview

Polk Audio is a manufacturer of audio products best known for their home and car speakers. The company also produces a series of personal audio products including headphones and portable audio solutions. Polk Audio is located in Baltimore, Maryland and in 2006 was acquired by Directed Electronics which is headquartered in Vista, CA.

Need for Faster, More Fail-Safe Solution Led to ExaGrid

Polk Audio had deployed an enterprise tape solution as part of an overall IT infrastructure upgrade; however, keeping up with growing amounts of data still proved difficult, and the firm's IT staff needed a solution that was fail safe and easier to manage.

"Even though we had installed an enterprise-class tape drive, we were still dealing with the limitations of tape and were spending too much time physically changing tapes and troubleshooting backup jobs. Our full weekly backups were taking over 30 hours to complete, which was way too long," said Melanie Szwitich, Director of Information Technology and Direct Sales Operations at Polk Audio.

Szwitich said that she decided to look at disk-based backup solutions and narrowed down the field to systems from ExaGrid and EMC Data Domain.

"We took a close look at both solutions and chose the ExaGrid system. With the ExaGrid, the last full backup remains available on the landing zone so that we have the latest and greatest information available at our fingertips," she said. "Restoring data from the ExaGrid system is so much faster and less labor-intensive than with tape. It takes us longer to log onto the server than it does to restore a file."

GRID Architecture Ensures Investment Protection

Szwitich said that the ExaGrid system offered superior investment protection

compared to other systems. "We were impressed with ExaGrid's GRID architecture. We're confident that we can easily and cost-effectively scale the system to handle more data at any point in the future. We're not worried that the solution will be obsolete in a few years as we have been with other technology purchases."

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.

Backup Times Reduced from 30 Hours to 6.5 Hours

Polk Audio installed the ExaGrid system in its main datacenter and is planning to purchase a second unit for disaster recovery in the near future. The ExaGrid system works along with the firm's existing backup application, Symantec Backup Exec.

"We currently perform full backups to the ExaGrid and also run them concurrently to tape for disaster recovery. Full backups to



tape take nearly 30 hours but the same backups take just 6.5 hours to the ExaGrid system," said Szvitich. "I also like that I can run several different backup jobs to the ExaGrid system simultaneously. During the week I can pick and choose to perform full backups on certain resources and incrementals on others. It's given us a lot of flexibility."

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.

Fast Setup, Proactive, Experienced Customer Support

Szvitich installed the ExaGrid system in the company's datacenter herself and then called into the ExaGrid customer support engineer assigned to Polk Audio to complete the setup.

"Our ExaGrid support engineer walked me through the installation process, which gave me an extra level of comfort in the beginning," she said.

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 support engineer is extremely proactive, knowledgeable, and helpful. It's nice to deal consistently with one engineer because I feel he knows our environment, so he can give us guidance on how to best manage and fine tune our system," Szvitich said. "Support is also responsive when it comes down to replacement parts. We once had a malfunctioning drive and the part was identified and a replacement shipped out for delivery the next day."

Szvitich said that for Polk Audio, the ExaGrid system has eliminated many of the stresses associated with backups.

"The ExaGrid system has helped us reduce backup times and the amount of time we spend managing and worrying about backups. We've been very happy with the system," she said.

ExaGrid and Symantec Backup Exec

Symantec Backup Exec is the gold standard in Windows data recovery, providing 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. It also supports single-drive libraries, encryption, and disaster recovery. High-performance agents and options provide fast, flexible, granular protection and recovery, 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 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.