

# The Seattle Times Chooses ExaGrid over Data Domain for Seamless Scalability

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

## The Seattle Times

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Michael Fichtenholtz  
Senior Unix Administrator  
*The Seattle Times*

### Key Benefits:

- System's GRID architecture has allowed for easy expansion; increased capacity added with data growth
- Excessive manhours spent managing tape has been significantly reduced
- Backups are 'far easier to manage'
- The system 'just works'

### Customer Overview

*The Seattle Times* serves the Northwest with Pulitzer Prize-winning journalism that impacts its community. As a news media company with a laser focus on journalistic standards and excellence, *The Seattle Times* provides clarity above the content clutter and engages readers across print and digital platforms to provide news that matters where, when, and how they want it. Founded in 1896, *The Seattle Times* remains a family-owned business with deep roots in principled, investigative news coverage and service to its community.

### Tape Backups Time Consuming and Costly

*The Seattle Times* had been backing up approximately 60TB of data per week to one large tape library and a number of smaller libraries, but its IT department found dealing with tape to be time consuming and the constant purchasing of tape to be expensive.

"We were spending nearly a thousand dollars per month on tape cartridges, and managing tape was taking up too many man hours," said Michael Fichtenholtz, senior Unix administrator at *The Seattle Times*. "We decided to look for a more automated backup solution capable of reducing our reliance on tape."

### Scalability a Key Factor in Choosing the ExaGrid System

*The Seattle Times* decided to purchase the ExaGrid system after evaluating solutions from EMC Data Domain and Quantum.

"We looked carefully at several other solutions, but in the end, what really impressed us was ExaGrid's scalability. Our data is constantly growing, and the ability to increase system capacity and performance by simply adding appliances to our GRID is a big plus," Fichtenholtz said. "Other systems we looked at were more complex and required forklift upgrades for expansion."

The company initially purchased two ExaGrid systems and installed them in its main datacenter to back up its editorial and business intelligence systems. The systems work along with the firm's existing backup applications, EMC NetWorker and Symantec NetBackup.

Fichtenholtz said that the system has already been expanded to handle increased backup requirements.

"We started with two systems and added a third to the GRID to increase capacity. It really couldn't have been easier," he said. "We installed the unit and then I worked with ExaGrid's customer support staff to complete the configuration, and it was automatically recognized and added to the GRID."

ExaGrid uses a GRID-based configuration, so when the system needs to expand, additional appliance nodes are attached to the GRID, bringing with them not only additional disk but also processing power, memory, and bandwidth. This type of configuration allows the system to maintain all the aspects of performance as the amount of data grows. 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.

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## Post-Process Data Deduplication Speeds Backups, Maximizes Storage

Fichtenholtz noted that data deduplication was another factor in choosing the ExaGrid system over its competitors.

“We liked ExaGrid’s post-process approach to data deduplication. With the ExaGrid, the deduplication occurs after the backup has landed on the system so jobs run quickly,” he said. “It’s also been very effective at reducing our data, and we’re able to keep plenty of retention on the system in a small footprint.”

ExaGrid combines standard compression along with zone-level data deduplication, which stores changes from backup to backup instead of storing full file copies. 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. This unique approach typically reduces the disk space required by a range of 10:1 to 50:1 or more, delivering unparalleled cost savings and performance. 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.

## Easy-to-Use System Reduces the Amount of Time Managing Backups

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 assigned to individual accounts. The system is fully supported and was designed and manufactured for maximum uptime with redundant, hot-swappable components.

“Our backup processes are far easier to manage with the ExaGrid system than with tape,” Fichtenholtz said. “We have two operators here who used to spend approximately 30 to 40 percent of their time dealing with tape. We’ve been able to recoup that time spent, and we also have peace of mind that our backup jobs are being completed each and every night. I check the logs to make sure that things are running correctly each day, but other than that, the system just works.”

Fichtenholtz said that he also appreciates ExaGrid’s customer support model.

“We’ve had a very good experience with the engineer assigned to our account. He’s extremely responsive and knowledgeable,

and always gives us sound advice. We couldn’t ask for anything more,” he said. “The ExaGrid system has been rock solid and has reduced the amount of time and energy we spend managing backups.”

## ExaGrid and EMC NetWorker

EMC NetWorker provides a complete, flexible and integrated backup and recovery solution for Windows, NetWare, Linux and UNIX environments. For large datacenters or individual departments, EMC NetWorker protects and helps ensure the availability of all critical applications and data. It features the highest levels of hardware support for even the largest devices, innovative support for disk technologies, storage area network (SAN) and network attached storage (NAS) environments and reliable protection of enterprise class databases and messaging systems.

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

## ExaGrid and Symantec NetBackup

Symantec NetBackup is the one backup and recovery solution that brings together multiple disparate solutions. Whether that is uniting snapshot and replication, physical and virtual, or the cloud, NetBackup provides a variety of features to help meet backup and recovery SLAs, reduce management overhead, and drive down storage costs.

Organizations using 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.

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