ExaGrid Helps U.S. Probation Office for the Northern District of Illinois Cut Backup Times, Makes Restoring Files Simple

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Rome Palmore
Senior Network Administrator
U.S. Probation Office, Northern District of Illinois

Customer Overview

The United States Probation Office is part of the United States Court for the Northern District of Illinois. The office covers the same geographical areas as the Court. Probation offices are located in or near the federal courthouses in Chicago and Rockford.

Long Backups Led to Network Performance Issues

The IT staff for the U.S. Probation Office for the Northern District of Illinois was having difficulty properly backing up data with tape. In particular, network performance had begun to suffer due to long backup times.

"With tape, our backups were taking over 14 hours to complete and our network was suffering. In one instance, we had to cancel the backup job because we were requesting data from a database and the system was slowing down. As a Federal agency, we need to be able to access our data in a timely manner and we found that we simply couldn't do that efficiently with tape," said Rome Palmore, Senior Network Administrator for the U.S. Probation Office for the Northern District of Illinois. "We needed a solution that would shorten our backup times and provide a more reliable way for us to store and retrieve data."

ExaGrid Reduces Nightly Backup Times

The U.S. Probation Office for the Northern District of Illinois chose a two-site disk-based backup solution with data deduplication from ExaGrid to work alongside the facility's existing backup application, Symantec's Backup Exec. The ExaGrid systems are kept in its Lisle and Chicago offices to back up all of the agency's data.

Since installing the ExaGrid system, Palmore reports that nightly differential backup times have been cut by 6 hours with the ExaGrid system. "The ExaGrid system does a

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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 byte-level data de-duplication technology moves only changes, requiring minimal WAN bandwidth.

Ability to Add Second System for Data Replication, Scalability to Meet Future Demands

"We like the fact that we can add additional systems in the as our data grows. It gives us a lot of flexibility. And as we grow, the system can be expanded easily to accommodate even more data," said Palmore.

Scalability was also an important factor in choosing the ExaGrid system. ExaGrid's GRID computing software makes the system highly scalable, and when plugged into a switch, different sized configurations can be

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mixed and matched into a single GRID system with capacities of up to a 100TB 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.

Easy Setup, Responsive Customer Support

TThe ExaGrid system was designed to be easy to setup and maintain, and ExaGrid's industry-leading customer support team is staffed by trained, in-house engineers who are dedicated to individual accounts. The ExaGrid system is fully supported and was designed and manufactured for maximum uptime with redundant, hot-swappable components.

"We were able to set the ExaGrid system up ourselves and it was very straightforward.   From the outset, we have had a terrific relationship with our ExaGrid customer support engineer. He's extremely knowledgeable and he's always checking to ensure that the system is working correctly," said Palmore. "We've been very pleased with the ExaGrid system. Our backup times have improved tremendously and we don't have issues with our backups affecting system performance anymore."

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 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 or call us at 1-800-868-6985.

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**.