

Vology Gains Improved Retention and Better Reliability with ExaGrid

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Andy Swenson
Chief Information Officer
Vology

Customer Overview

Ranked in the Inc. 5000 list of fastest growing private companies in the US for six consecutive years, Vology is a leading global technology solutions provider that serves tens of thousands of customers across 80 countries. Vology has one of the industry's largest inventories of top quality new and certified pre-owned manufacturer products. The company offers total IT asset lifecycle management expertise to help customers power their enterprises as their technology requirements evolve. Vology is headquartered in Tampa Bay, Florida with offices across the U.S.

NAS Failure, Concerns about Retention and Disaster Recovery Led to Search for a New Solution

Vology had been backing up the majority of its data to a NAS device, but after the device failed, the company's IT staff became concerned about its ability to back up reliably. After the failure, Vology was forced to revert many of its backup jobs to tape, but worries about retention and disaster recovery remained.

"We have a virtualized environment and do a good deal of replication, but we weren't able to keep any archival history, and our recovery times weren't acceptable," said Andy Swenson, CIO at Vology. "We really needed a reliable, robust solution that could deliver consistently good backups for all of our data and enable us to keep more retention," he said.

Flexible ExaGrid System Easily Fits into Existing Environment

After looking at several software-based data deduplication options and an EMC Data Domain unit, Vology decided to purchase a disk-based backup system with data deduplication from ExaGrid. Virtual data is backed up via Quest vRanger locally and then replicated to DR servers located in Atlanta, while data from both physical and virtual servers is backed up to the ExaGrid using Symantec Backup Exec.

"One of the things we like about the ExaGrid system is its modular architecture. We started out with one system, but we can easily add a second system for data replication at a later date to improve disaster recovery," said Swenson. "Also, a lot of the solutions we looked at were software-based products. The nice thing about the ExaGrid system is that it fit seamlessly into our environment. It worked out of the box with our existing backup applications, so we didn't have to retrain people."

Data Deduplication Maximizes Disk Space

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 zone-level data deduplication technology moves only changes, requiring minimal WAN bandwidth.

"ExaGrid's strong data deduplication technology enabled us to purchase a smaller system than we otherwise would



have. We didn't have to over-buy to account for retention," Swenson said. "The data deduplication technology does a great job at reducing our data. It enables us to maximize retention so that we have weeks of data at our fingertips. That alone was of huge value to us."

Easy Setup and Management

Swenson said that installing the ExaGrid system was fast and easy.

"One of our staff members installed the system and then worked with an ExaGrid support engineer remotely on configuration," he said. "We got up to speed pretty quickly on the system. Since we were able to keep our existing backup applications, setup was a matter of putting the system in, turning it on, testing it and then we were ready to go. We didn't have to go through any significant training, and the learning curve was minimal."

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.

"The ExaGrid system is very straightforward and easy to use. It doesn't require a lot of care and feeding, which minimizes management time," Swenson said. "Also, ExaGrid's customer support has been proactive and helpful, and we know we can rely on our support engineer if we have any issues."

GRID Architecture Ensures Scalability

"One of the best things about the ExaGrid system is its flexibility. We can add a second system for replication at any time, and we can also scale it up if our backup requirements increase," said Swenson.

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 130TB 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.

"The ExaGrid system is extremely reliable, and we have a high degree of confidence in it. I don't have to worry about our backup jobs anymore, and we have plenty of retention," said Swenson. "Installing the ExaGrid system really has taken the worry out of our backups."

ExaGrid and Quest vRanger Pro

Quest vRanger Pro is a premier backup and restore solution for virtualized environments. Administrators can schedule regular image-level backups of virtual or physical machines – while the machine is still running. Images can be stored locally in the SAN or sent as compressed files over a WAN to remote locations to support disaster recovery strategies.

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 zone-level data deduplication, delivering a disk-based solution that is more cost effective than standard SATA drives. 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 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.