WORK Inc. Gains Faster Backups and Restores, Improves Disaster Recovery with ExaGrid

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>
> **Jeremy Busey**
> **IT Manager**
> **WORK Inc.**

Customer Overview

WORK Inc. is the largest employer of people with disabilities in New England. WORK Inc. serves over 800 individuals with all types of disabilities, is New England's leader in the Federal AbilityOne contracts (with over 100 individuals served), and provides complete facilities management for many buildings including the John F. Kennedy Library, a national landmark. The agency operates 12 twenty-four hour residential sites serving 60 individuals, and assists another 100 individuals with its supported living programs. With a current budget of over 24 million dollars, WORK Inc.'s dedicated staff and managers continue its mission to provide vocational training and placement services that make the lives of individuals with disabilities better and more independent.

Rapid Data Growth Led to Search for New Backup Approach

The IT staff at WORK Inc. began to look for disk-based backup solutions in an effort to alleviate long backup times and to reduce reliance on tape. The company experienced rapid data growth after completing several technology initiatives and had difficulty keeping up with nightly backups and large amounts of tape.

"As our organization evolved from a technology standpoint, our backup jobs grew larger and larger. We had a hard time getting everything done because our nightly backups had grown to nearly 18 hours and our weekly backups were taking most of the weekend. It didn't leave much room for error," said Jeremy Busey, IT manager at WORK Inc. "The other big issue we had was disaster recovery. I had been taking tapes home on weekends for safekeeping and while it wasn't ideal, it was manageable because we were only using two tapes. As our data continued to grow, the number of tapes we were generating mushroomed and the hassle and cost grew out of control."

ExaGrid Delivers Deduplication and Ability to Replicate Data for Disaster Recovery

After initially considering using backing up to straight disk, the IT staff at WORK Inc. decided to look for a solution that could provide data deduplication to reduce the amount of data stored and automatic replication for disaster recovery.

"We initially looked at using Symantec Backup Exec to provide deduplication and replication along with low-cost disk for storage. However, we were planning a virtualization project and didn't want to add another big piece of hardware to our rack. We also didn't want to add a lot of capacity to our virtual server farm just to have it churning all day long doing deduplication and replication," said Busey. "We learned about ExaGrid and really liked its appliance packaging. It delivered everything we were looking for in a single, streamlined unit."

WORK Inc. purchased a two-site ExaGrid disk-based backup system with data deduplication to work alongside its existing backup solution, Symantec Backup Exec 2010. The primary ExaGrid system was installed in WORK Inc.'s main datacenter and a second system was installed in the organization's facility in New Bedford, Mass. Data is automatically replicated from the primary ExaGrid system to the second system each night in case it is needed for disaster recovery. The ExaGrid system backs up data from virtual servers, along with file data and email.

EXAGRID™

Dedupe Ratios as High as 32:1, Faster Backups and Restores

"As a healthcare provider, we have a lot of stagnant file data because we have to retain information for a long period of time, so strong data deduplication technology was very important to us," said Busey. "ExaGrid's data deduplication technology is very, very efficient at reducing our data. That, along with ExaGrid's level of automation and overall efficiency made it a huge win for us."

Busey said that since installing the ExaGrid system, WORK Inc. has been experiencing overall data deduplication ratios as high as 32:1, and its overall file storage ratio is 17:1.

The ExaGrid system 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.

Since installing the ExaGrid system, Busey reports that WORK Inc.'s backup window has been significantly reduced. The organization's nightly backup jobs now run between 10 and 90 minutes and weekly full backup jobs are completed in less than three hours.

"Our backup jobs are extremely fast and it's so nice to not have to deal with tape," said Busey. But for me, the biggest gain is in restore time. With the ExaGrid, we can restore files in seconds and we don't have to dig through tape."

Easy Setup and Installation, Industry-leading Customer Support

Busey set up the system with assistance from the ExaGrid customer support engineer dedicated to WORK Inc.'s account.

"When we were ready to start the install, I called into our ExaGrid support engineer and he worked with me to get everything up and running. He gave me a basic administration overview, helped me build the Backup Exec server and then assisted me with creating backup jobs and setting up the replication. It was a fast, easy process," said Busey.

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.

"We're continuously impressed with ExaGrid's customer support. It's wonderful to have a single point of contact because our support engineer is familiar with our environment and our business. He really knows his way around both the ExaGrid system and Backup Exec," said Busey.

Scalability to Handle Increased Demand

As WORK Inc.'s backup demands continue to grow, the ExaGrid system can easily be expanded to accommodate more data. 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 flexible and scalable so it can easily grow to meet our needs in the future," said Busey. "The ExaGrid system is the perfect backup solution. It gave us everything we needed in one package, including data deduplication and the ability to replicate data offsite. It's extremely efficient at backing up and restoring data and it's very hands-off in terms of management and administration."

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.

Intelligent Data Protection

ExaGrid is a cost-effective, scalable disk-based backup solution that replaces tape in your nightly backup process, enabling faster and more reliable backups at a price comparable to a new tape library. ExaGrid offers the only disk backup appliance with data deduplication purpose - built for backup that leverages a unique architecture optimized for performance, scalability and price.

The ExaGrid system is a plug-and-play disk backup appliance that works with existing backup applications. ExaGrid's patented zone-level deduplication technology minimizes the amount of data to be stored by storing only the unique bytes across backups instead of storing the redundant data. This unique approach reduces the amount of disk space needed by a range of 10:1 to as high as 50:1 or more, delivering unparalleled performance in a cost-effective solution.

For more information about ExaGrid, please visit us at www.exagrid.com or call us at 1-800-868-6985.