Netherlands Province Dramatically Reduces Backup and Restore Times Using Disk Backup With Deduplication

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

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Benny Houterman
Technical IT Advisor

Customer Overview

Zeeland is one of the 12 provinces and regional government entities in the Netherlands.

Search for More Efficient Approach to Backup Leads to ExaGrid

For years, Zeeland Province used tape to back up its data. Tape served the organization's needs for quite a while but the organization simply outgrew the system.

"All the time we were spending managing and administering all that tape could have been better spent on managing more important IT initiatives," said Benny Houterman, technical IT advisor. "We desperately needed to change the way we were doing things and switching to a disk-based backup system seemed like the best way to optimize our processes."

After careful evaluation of several market-leading solutions, Zeeland chose a two-site ExaGrid disk-based backup with deduplication solution. The ExaGrid systems are located in the organization's two main data centers and work alongside its existing backup application, CommVault Simpana™.

"It was important for us to find a solution that seamlessly worked with our backup application and within our existing IT environment. There were some other good solutions out there but in the end, we found ExaGrid to be the best and most affordable solutions for us," said Houterman.

Houterman said the new ExaGrid system is managed by system administrators for all regular backups and restores while the organization's Oracle DBAs manage all their database backups and restores themselves using Oracle RMAN.

"By choosing a solution where CommVault Simpana would handle regular backups and RMAN would write directly to the ExaGrid, we have found a perfect solution to keep the administration of backups and recovery where it belongs," said Houterman.

Backups Reduced from 36 hours to 12 hours

Since installing the ExaGrid system, Zeeland has seen a significant reduction in its backup times. According to Houterman, the organization was regularly outside its backup window with backup times reaching up to 36 hours to complete with tape. Now, with the ExaGrid, the organization has seen a dramatic drop down to 12 hours.

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As the company's data grows, the ExaGrid system can easily scale to back up additional 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 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.

Houterman said "the ability to easily scale was a key differentiator for us when we selected the ExaGrid. Some of the other systems we looked at were either not very scalable or were too costly to add future

EXAGRID™

capacity. With the ExaGrid, we have the ability to easily add capacity by plugging in additional units … it's that simple."

Data Deduplication Speeds Restores, Maximizes Disk Space

ExaGrid's approach to deduplication was also a key consideration for Houterman and his team. ExaGrid provides 2:1 compression for the last backup and deduplication for previous backups to ensure the fastest restore speed possible and to maximize disk space. Zeeland Province backs up a wide variety of data including Oracle and Exchange databases and has been experiencing data deduplication rates up to 12:1 for the overall ratio. For specific Oracle databases, Zeeland has seen impressive deduplication rates of over 100:1.

"We like how ExaGrid compresses the most recent backup and keeps it in the landing space which enables us to restore data quickly. Restoring data from tape took a lot of time and it wasn't always reliable. Now, with the ExaGrid, restores are made in a matter of seconds or minutes," said Houterman.

ExaGrid's post-process data deduplication processes data after it has landed on the system, ensuring the fastest backup times possible. 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.

Easy Setup and Administration, Superior Customer Support

ExaGrid comes packaged as a turnkey appliance and was designed to be easy to deploy and manage and to deliver maximum uptime with redundant, hot-swappable components. All components are fully supported by ExaGrid's trained, inhouse engineers dedicated to individual accounts.

"Installing the ExaGrid system was simple and when we did have any questions or needed assistance, there was an experienced support person available to guide us," said Houterman. "The support team is always readily available and easy to reach. I also like that they have a clear understanding of our IT environment and our daily backup processes."

ExaGrid and CommVault Simpana

CommVault Simpana Backup and Recovery software contains extensive capabilities to simplify the management of backup media resources. Simpana software writes backup data to a broad collection of storage devices, including disk as a media target. This ability to write to magnetic disk as a functional equal of all other media types while exploiting the random access nature of the disk media sets Simpana software apart.

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

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