

Faced with a Forklift Upgrade, RFI Ousts Data Domain, Implements ExaGrid for Scalability, Future Growth

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Frank Jennings
Network Administrator
RFI Communications & Security Systems

Customer Overview

RFI Communications & Security Systems is a diversified multi-systems integrator that has been designing, installing, servicing and monitoring, technology-driven security and fire/life safety solutions for more than 30 years throughout the western United States. RFI maintains four regional West Coast offices with the corporate office and their state-of-the-art 24-hour monitoring center located in San Jose, California.

Maxed out Data Domain System Left IT Staff with Little Retention, Limited Possibilities for Expansion

The IT staff at RFI had been backing up the company's data to a Data Domain unit, but when it was time to expand the system, the only choice was a forklift upgrade because the system wasn't scalable.

"We had outgrown our Data Domain system, and our only option was to buy a whole new box to handle our growing backup requirements," said Frank Jennings, network administrator at RFI. "We also wanted the ability to add a second unit offsite for data replication, and we couldn't do that with the Data Domain unit either. With our retention dwindling, we decided the time was right to begin looking at other solutions, and we discovered ExaGrid."

ExaGrid System Provides Scalability, Ability to Replicate to Second Site

RFI purchased an ExaGrid system to work alongside the company's existing backup application, Symantec Backup Exec. The ExaGrid system backs up both physical and virtual systems, including Windows servers, SQL data, accounting and other business applications as well as the organization's alarm monitoring software.

"Unlike the Data Domain system, the ExaGrid will give us the ability to easily scale the system up as our data grows, and it will also enable us to add a second system offsite for data replication," said Jennings. "It was more cost effective as well."

Data Deduplication Effectively Reduces Data and Enables Faster Backups and Restores

"One of the things that impressed us about the ExaGrid system was its data deduplication technology. We liked the fact that it holds our most current data in a compressed state for faster recovery. With the Data Domain system, the data is deduplicated immediately so backups and restores take longer," said Jennings. "The ExaGrid also deduplicates the data more effectively than the Data Domain system did, which enables us to maximize retention. We're currently seeing an average deduplication ratio of 63:1, and some of our data is actually deduplicating at an even higher rate."

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.



Faster Backups and Restores

Jennings said that the company's backup times have been significantly reduced since installing the ExaGrid system.

"Our backups and restores are much faster with the ExaGrid system. For example, backups of our main file server have been reduced from 24 hours down to just 8 hours. Restore times are also better because we have access to the compressed data," he said. "Our retention is also much better with the ExaGrid system. It's a larger unit, so we're able to store 6 months of information instead of the 30 days we were limited to with the Data Domain system."

Easy Installation, Superior Customer Support

Jennings noted that ExaGrid's tight integration with Backup Exec and easy setup made installing the ExaGrid system simple and painless.

"Our ExaGrid support engineer walked us through the system features and helped us out with setup. It really was easy to get the system up and running, and it works beautifully with Backup Exec, which made the learning curve much faster," he said. "The system is also easy to manage and administer, and it saves us time each and every day."

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 is a solid system, and it's backed up by terrific customer support. We had a minor issue when we tried to upgrade Backup Exec, but we contacted our support engineer and he was able to help us out and correct the situation quickly," said Jennings. "We also needed to replace a battery on our RAID controller, and it was shipped out immediately so our backups weren't affected at all. Support has been wonderful."

No Forklift Upgrade Required to Expand System

As RFI's backup needs continue to grow, the ExaGrid system can easily scale 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.

"Expandability was the main reason we began looking for a replacement for the Data Domain unit. ExaGrid's GRID architecture will enable us to grow the system as our backup requirements grow and we can simply add additional units to scale up," said Jennings. "We can also expand the system to incorporate a second site for data replication. The ExaGrid system is extremely scalable and flexible, and it's a solution that should serve us well into the future."

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'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.

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.