



For Over a Decade, City Finds ExaGrid and Commvault to be a 'Solid' Backup Solution

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



"We've had a great experience with ExaGrid—and we have invested a lot in this technology. Considering the current investment, and the fact that ExaGrid is performing at a level that meets our requirements, the city has not felt compelled to search for alternatives. It's been a very solid product for us."

Patrick Lord
Network Operations Manager

Customer Overview

On the shores of Bellingham Bay with Mount Baker as its backdrop, Bellingham is the last major city before the Washington coastline meets the Canadian border. The City of Bellingham, which serves as the county seat of Whatcom County, is at the center of a uniquely picturesque area offering a rich variety of recreational, cultural, educational and economic activities.

ExaGrid Chosen for Commvault Backups

The IT staff at the City of Bellingham has been backing up its data using Commvault for 25 years, originally using DLT tape as a backup storage target. As the tape technology aged, the IT staff decided to look into a new backup storage solution.

"We wanted to find a solution that was more efficient than tape, and one that provided data deduplication," said Patrick Lord, network operations manager for the City of Bellingham. "We evaluated some of the major backup storage brands, and ExaGrid actually reached out to us, so we added them to our evaluations, and ExaGrid was by far the superior product in, in terms of administration, ease of use, and cost."

The city installed an ExaGrid system at its primary site that replicates data to a disaster recovery (DR) site. The ExaGrid system is easy to install and use and works seamlessly with all of the most frequently used backup applications, so an organization can retain its investment in existing applications and processes. In addition, ExaGrid appliances can be used at primary and secondary sites to supplement or eliminate offsite tapes with live data repositories for DR.

Investment in Infrastructure Results in Faster Backup Jobs

The city has 50TB of data that Lord backs up regularly to ensure data protection. "We back up almost all of our systems on daily basis. Then we rotate between full, incremental,



and differential, so there are backup jobs going on constantly," he said. In addition to installing ExaGrid, the city also made other infrastructure enhancements, such as faster networking speed, the combination of which Lord credits for making backup jobs much faster.

ExaGrid writes backups directly to a disk-cache Landing Zone, avoiding inline processing and ensuring the highest possible backup performance, which results in the shortest backup window.

Adaptive Deduplication performs deduplication and replication in parallel with backups so that an RTO and RPO can be easily met. Available system cycles are utilized to perform deduplication and offsite replication for an optimal recovery point at the disaster recovery site. Once complete, the onsite data is protected and immediately available in its full unduplicated form for fast restores, VM Instant Recoveries, and tape copies while the offsite data is ready for DR.

Key Benefits:

- ExaGrid performed best in evaluations, chosen by the city to work with Commvault
- Deduplication frees up space so that the city can retain more data
- ExaGrid is a 'solid system' with 'excellent support'



ExaGrid Provides Greater Deduplication, Saving on Storage

As a city government, there are mandated policies that the city must follow in terms of long-term retention for certain types of data. Long-term retention can cause strain on storage capacity, but Lord finds that ExaGrid's deduplication helps keep storage manageable. "Deduplication has helped significantly by freeing up space that we would otherwise have to accommodate. We're able to retain data longer than we would normally be able to," he said.

Commvault deduplicated data can be sent to ExaGrid appliances for further deduplication. ExaGrid takes the average 6:1 Commvault deduplication ratio up to 20:1 which reduces the storage footprint by 300%. This greatly reduces the cost of the backup storage while allowing no change to the current Commvault configuration. ExaGrid can replicate the 20:1 deduplicated data to a second site for offsite long-term retention and DR. The additional deduplication saves WAN bandwidth in addition to saving storage at both sites.

'Straightforward' Scalability

The city has been using ExaGrid for nearly a decade, and has taken advantage of ExaGrid's trade-in program to refresh its system on several occasions with newer, larger models as the city's data has grown. "Every few years, we refresh our backup storage and it's a very straightforward process. It's as simple as installing the newer ExaGrid appliances, pointing them at the new targets, and letting the older ones age out," said Lord.

The ExaGrid system can easily scale to accommodate data growth. ExaGrid's computing software makes the system highly scalable, and when plugged into a switch, appliances of any size or age can be mixed and matched in a single system with capacities of up to a 2PB full backup plus retention and an ingest rate of up to 432TB per hour. Once virtualized, they appear as a single system to the backup server, and load balancing of all data across servers is automatic.

About ExaGrid

ExaGrid provides tiered backup storage with a unique disk-cache Landing Zone, long-term retention repository and scale-out architecture. ExaGrid's Landing Zone enables the fastest backups, restores, and instant VM recoveries. The retention repository offers the lowest cost for long-term retention. ExaGrid's scale-out architecture includes full appliances in a scalable system. Learn more at www.exagrid.com.

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'Solid' System with 'Excellent' Support

Lord credits ExaGrid's ease of use and high-quality customer support as the reasons the city continues to use an ExaGrid system for over a decade. "We've had a great experience with ExaGrid—and we have invested a lot in this technology. Considering the current investment, and the fact that ExaGrid is performing at a level that meets our requirements, the city has not felt compelled to search for alternatives. It's been a very solid product for us," he said.

"From an administrative perspective, ExaGrid is incredibly easy to use. It's been extremely stable, so we've had very few reasons to call ExaGrid customer support. Our calls with them usually involve firmware upgrades, as opposed to something being wrong with the hardware. Ever since we first installed the system years ago, we've received excellent support. The ExaGrid support engineers have been great to work with, and it's easy to work with them in a remote session over WebEx," he said.

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 level 2 engineers who are assigned to individual accounts. The system is fully supported, and was designed and manufactured for maximum uptime with redundant, hot-swappable components.

ExaGrid and Commvault

ExaGrid's Tiered Backup Storage requires close integration between the backup software and the backup storage. Together, Commvault and ExaGrid provide a cost-effective backup solution that scales to meet the needs of demanding enterprise environments. ExaGrid improves the storage economics of Commvault environments by working with Commvault deduplication on to provide up to 20:1 reduction in storage consumption – a 3X storage savings over using Commvault deduplication alone. This combination dramatically lowers the cost of onsite and offsite backup storage.

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