



Grow Financial Replaces Data Domain with ExaGrid to Avoid Forklift Upgrade and Speed Restores



USA

Customer Overview

Grow Financial Federal Credit Union is a not-for-profit working for the benefit of members, not for corporate shareholders. Grow Financial provides a comprehensive array of personal and business banking services to more than 200,000 members throughout the Tampa Bay area and the Columbia/Charleston areas of South Carolina, with \$2.8 billion in assets and 25 neighborhood store locations. Established in 1955 to provide a safe place to save and borrow money for the military and civilian personnel of MacDill Air Force Base, Grow Financial has since expanded membership to include employees of more than 1,100 local businesses.

Key Benefits:

- Scale-out scalability means credit union will never again face a forklift upgrade
- Quick restores since data doesn't need to be rehydrated as in the past
- Post-process dedupe provides much faster backups
- Less time managing backups results in more time for other more important priorities

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Dave Lively

Backup and Recovery Systems Administrator

Dell EMC Data Domain System Reaches Capacity

When Grow Financial began running out of capacity on its Dell EMC Data Domain unit, the credit union decided to look at alternative solutions capable of delivering faster restore speeds and better scalability.

"Our Data Domain unit did a good job of performing basic backups, but it really fell short on restores," said Dave Lively, backup and recovery systems administrator at Grow Financial. "In our business, time is money, and downtime can be calculated in losses of thousands of dollars an hour. Ninety-nine percent of the time, we need to restore data from the most recent backup, but with the Data Domain unit, stored data had to be reconstituted and the recovery process was long and complicated."

Lively said that the credit union decided to replace the Data Domain unit after suffering through a few critical incidents where stored data couldn't be accessed quickly.

"We learned that ultimately, it's all about recovery speed. It doesn't matter how effectively the data is compressed if you can't access it when you need it," he said

ExaGrid Purchased for Scale-out Architecture, Adaptive Deduplication

"We decided to purchase the ExaGrid system because its scalability and backup approach were superior to the Data Domain unit," Lively said. "ExaGrid's scale-out architecture enables us to expand the system as needed by plugging additional units into a single system and its post-process data deduplication method delivers faster restores because we can access data immediately from the landing zone."

Grow Financial initially installed a single ExaGrid system in its Tampa headquarters and then expanded the system to include a unit in its



disaster recovery site in Jacksonville. The systems have been scaled up to handle more backup data, and the credit union now has a total of three units in Tampa and three in Jacksonville. The ExaGrid system work along with Veeam and Dell Networker to back up the credit union's servers and nearly 1,000 workstations.

"Scalability was a big concern when we began looking for a new backup solution. The Data Domain unit would have required a forklift upgrade to expand, but ExaGrid's scale-out architecture enables us to simply add additional units to improve capacity and performance," Lively said.

The ExaGrid system can easily scale to accommodate data growth. ExaGrid's software makes the system highly scalable – appliances of any size or age can be mixed and matched in a single system. A single scale-out system can take in up to a 2.7PB full backup plus retention at an ingest rate of up to 488TB per hour.

ExaGrid appliances contain not just disk but also processing power, memory, and bandwidth. When the system needs to expand, additional appliances are simply added to the existing system. The system scales linearly, maintaining a fixed-length backup window as data grows so customers only pay for what they need, when they need it.

Data is deduplicated into a non-network-facing Repository Tier with automatic load balancing and global deduplication across all repositories.

Faster Backups and Restores with Adaptive Data Deduplication

Lively said that backups and restores are far more efficient with the ExaGrid system than with the credit union's old Data Domain unit.

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 for a strong recovery point (RPO). As data is being deduplicated to the repository, it can also be replicated to a second ExaGrid site or the public cloud for disaster recovery (DR).

"In my experience, most restores are performed from the most recent backup. Unlike the Data Domain system, which had to rehydrate data for restores, we have immediate access to the most recent backup on ExaGrid's landing zone," he said. "With the ExaGrid, we can write a lot more parallel streams to the unit than we could with Data Domain. I attribute a lot of the performance gains to the fact that our old unit deduplicated the data as it was backing up, while the ExaGrid backs the data up to the landing zone and then dedupes it."

ExaGrid's turnkey disk-based backup system combines enterprise drives with zone-level data deduplication, delivering a disk-based solution that is far more cost effective than simply backing up to disk with deduplication or using backup software deduplication to disk. ExaGrid's patented zone-level deduplication reduces the disk space needed by a range of 10:1 to 50:1, depending on the data types and retention periods, by storing only the unique objects across backups instead of redundant data. Adaptive Deduplication performs deduplication and replication in parallel with backups. As data is being deduplicated to the repository, it is also replicated to a second ExaGrid site or the public cloud for disaster recovery (DR).

Easy Administration, Superior Customer Support

Lively said that he finds the ExaGrid system reliable and easy to use. "The ExaGrid system is simple and straightforward, and there's a very small learning curve," he said. "The system itself is really stable and it runs extremely well, but if I do have a question or concern, I know I can count on our ExaGrid support engineer. We've been very impressed with our support engineer, and we have a high degree of confidence in his knowledge and experience."

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"I spend far less time managing the ExaGrid than I spent managing our Data Domain unit, and because of that, I can dedicate more of my energy to things like spotting trends or thinking about ways I can improve the efficiency of our backups," Lively said. "Installing the ExaGrid has given me peace of mind because I know that we can perform recoveries faster and if we need to expand the system, it's as easy as ordering another appliance and plugging it in."

ExaGrid and Veeam

Veeam's backup solutions and ExaGrid's Tiered Backup Storage combine for the industry's fastest backups, fastest restores, a scale-out storage system as data grows, and a strong ransomware recovery story – all at the lowest cost.

ExaGrid and Dell NetWorker

Dell NetWorker provides a complete, flexible and integrated backup and recovery solution for Windows, NetWare, Linux and UNIX environments. For large datacenters or individual departments, Dell EMC NetWorker protects and helps ensure the availability of all critical applications and data. It features the highest levels of hardware support for even the largest devices, innovative support for disk technologies, storage area network (SAN) and network attached storage (NAS) environments and reliable protection of enterprise class databases and messaging systems.

About ExaGrid

ExaGrid provides Tiered Backup Storage with a unique disk-cache Landing Zone that enables fastest backups and restores, a Repository Tier that offers the lowest cost for long-term retention and enables ransomware recovery, and scale-out architecture which includes full appliances with up to 2.7PB full backup in a single system.

Learn more at www.exagrid.com.

