EXAGRID®

Sky Deutschland Chooses Scalable ExaGrid-Veeam Solution for Its Backup Environment

sky

GERMANY

Key Benefits:

- Sky's POC reveals that ExaGrid integrates better with Veeam than deduplication appliances

- Switch to ExaGrid-Veeam solution results in faster backup and restore performance

- Scalability of ExaGrid and Veeam ideal for Sky's data growth across multiple data centers

- Sky's IT staff find that 'ExaGrid support is so much better than support from other vendors'

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Anis Smajlovic
Senior Solution Architect

Customer Overview

Sky Deutschland is one of the leading entertainment providers in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The program offering includes the best live sports, exclusive series, new film releases, a wide range of children's programming, exciting documentaries and entertaining shows - many of them Sky Originals. Sky Deutschland, with its headquarters in Unterföhring near Munich, is part of the Comcast Group and belongs to Europe's leading entertainment company Sky Limited.

ExaGrid Chosen for Integration with Veeam

The IT staff at Sky Deutschland had been backing up data to an inline, scale-up deduplication appliance. The staff found the solution complex to use and difficult to manage. As that solution reached its end of life, the staff looked into a replacement.

The IT staff had decided to switch to Veeam for a backup application, and decided to contact the backup storage solutions recommended on the Veeam website, including ExaGrid.

"At first, we were a bit wary of ExaGrid as it wasn't a name we knew very well. However, after we met with the ExaGrid team, we decided to move forward with a proof of concept (POC) and we were sent an ExaGrid system to test in our environment. I also did more research about ExaGrid, and was impressed with its scale-out architecture and horizontal growth as opposed to vertical, which I normally only see for cloud solutions. I really liked the idea of a solution that we could add onto so that only pay for what we need," said Anis Smajlovic, senior solution architect at Sky Deutschland.

"We decided to compare ExaGrid against other backup storage appliances, to see how well the different systems work with Veeam's Scale-Out Backup Repository (SOBR) feature in particular, and we realized that it works better with ExaGrid's architecture. It was easy to tell that Veeam and ExaGrid have a good partnership, because there is such integration between the products, especially as the Veeam Data Mover has been built into ExaGrid. After the POC, we decided to choose ExaGrid for our backup storage. Many people make choices on name alone, without checking what else is on the market. Our choice was based on the architecture and how cost-effective the solution is when considering data growth," said Smajlovic.

ExaGrid has integrated the Veeam Data Mover so that backups are written Veeam-to-Veeam versus Veeam-to-CIFS, which provides a 30% increase in backup performance. Since the Veeam Data Mover is not an open standard, it is far more secure than using CIFS and other open market protocols. In addition, because ExaGrid has integrated the Veeam Data Mover, Veeam synthetic fulls can be created six times faster than any other solution. ExaGrid stores the most recent Veeam backups in an undeduplicated form in its Landing Zone and has the Veeam Data Mover running on each ExaGrid appliance and has a processor in each appliance in a scale-out architecture. This combination of Landing Zone, Veeam Data Mover, and scale-out compute provides the fastest Veeam synthetic fulls versus any other solution on the market.

Scalability Important to Long-Term Planning

Sky Deutschland initially purchased the ExaGrid system it tested during the POC at its data center in Germany, and also scaled it out with additional appliances to accommodate the large amount of the data that the company needs to backup. Additional ExaGrid systems were later added

at secondary datacenters in Italy and Germany, replicating data between the sites for geo-resilient data protection. Smajlovic appreciates that ExaGrid is flexible, allowing appliances to be easily moved and added to any site, no matter the location.

"Some backup storage vendors will not allow for hardware to be moved across countries. ExaGrid allows for any piece of hardware to be moved, so if we close a location and open an office somewhere else, we can move our ExaGrid systems as well. This was an important consideration for our long-term planning," he said.

One the aspects Smajlovic appreciates about the combined solution of ExaGrid and Veeam is that the scale-out architecture of both ensures that backup and restore performance will not be affected by anticipated data growth, and that there will be no storage capacity issues with long-term retention. "When we need space, we can add more appliances to the system. Both solutions really scale out – we can add more as we need to. We don't feel locked into something because there are so many configuration possibilities. It's very a modular solution, so we can make adjustments and figure out how it fits best for us. For example, if we need more speed, then we will add more proxy servers from Veeam. That level of adjustment is completely flexible," he 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.

Better Backup and Restore Performance

Smajlovic backs up Sky Deutschland's data on a daily and monthly basis, with critical databases backed up as often as two to three times per day. There is a large amount of data to back up, which he anticipates will grow to about one petabyte, made up of VMs, virtual and physical servers, databases, and more. He has been pleased with the backup and restore performance with his ExaGrid-Veeam solution. "Our backups are definitely faster. The difference in speed is partially because our previous solution was older and at its end of life, but partially because of ExaGrid's architecture," he said.

"I really like how ExaGrid handles deduplication, with the data is stored in a landing zone first and then moved to retention, so there's no degradation of the data, making it faster to recover," said Smajlovic. ExaGrid and Veeam can instantly recover a file or VMware virtual machine by running it directly from the ExaGrid appliance in the event that the file is lost, corrupted or encrypted or the primary storage VM becomes unavailable. This instant recovery is possible because of ExaGrid's Landing Zone – a high-speed disk cache on the ExaGrid appliance that retains the most recent backups in their complete form. Once the primary storage environment has been brought back to a working state, the VM backed up on the ExaGrid appliance can then be migrated to primary storage for continued operation.

Simple Backup Management with Quality Support

Smajlovic appreciates how easy it is to set up and manage the ExaGrid system. "I like that I can manage all of our ExaGrid appliances from one interface. ExaGrid is very easy to use to use, I introduced the system to our newer employees and they were able to use it without any issue on their second day at the office," he said.

"From the beginning, the ExaGrid team has been supportive and great at teaching me about the system, answering every question I had so I didn't need to look up. By the time we had finished testing the product, I had learned so much from my ExaGrid support engineer, that I was able to install the system on my own. ExaGrid support is so much better than support from other vendors because we don't need to go through a ticketing system and explain everything from the beginning. We work with the same ExaGrid support engineer who helps us immediately, it almost feels like he works for us," said Smajlovic.

The ExaGrid system was designed to be easy to set up and operate. ExaGrid's industry-leading level 2 senior support engineers are assigned to individual customers, ensuring they always work with the same engineer. Customer's never have to repeat themselves to various support staff, and issues get resolved quickly.

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**.