

Arch Reinsurance Ltd. Replaces Tape Library, Cuts Backup Window in Half with ExaGrid

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



"We looked at all the big players including Data Domain, Quantum, and ExaGrid. It was a long process because we wanted to make sure that we were making the right choice, and we've been pleased with our decision."

Sheridan Smith
Information Technology
Manager
Arch Reinsurance Ltd.

Customer Overview

Arch Reinsurance (Bermuda) Ltd. provides specialty property and casualty reinsurance products through reinsurance intermediaries worldwide. These programs range from [Property Catastrophe](#) and [Property Excess of Loss](#) reinsurance to Professional Liability and [Marine](#) Treaties. Their Bermuda-based operation has a strong, proven management team, a commitment to underwriting discipline, and financial strength that is rated A+ from A.M. Best and A+ from Standard & Poor's.

Expanding Backup Window and Tape Limitations Lead to Evaluation of Disk-Based Alternatives

Arch Reinsurance Ltd. had been backing up its data to tape, and was becoming increasingly constrained by the limitations of tape media. Owing to the growing amount of data, it became increasingly difficult to write a full backup in the limited time Arch had for a backup window. According to Sheridan Smith, Information Technology Manager for Arch Reinsurance Ltd., not only was the backup window a problem, but the time it took to perform restores – especially if the required tape had already been moved offsite – was long and became an unacceptable limitation. Add to that the unreliability of the media itself, and Smith decided it was time to evaluate disk-based alternatives.

ExaGrid System of Choice for Arch

"We looked at all the big players including Data Domain, Quantum, and ExaGrid," said Smith. "It was a long process because we wanted to make sure that we were making the right choice, and we've been pleased with our decision. Not only was ExaGrid's post-sales support great, but the pre-sales support was as well. We're very picky and we were impressed with how thorough the pre-sales team was; they were very willing to go the extra mile to satisfy our questions. We've had no regrets."

Smith said that the main factors that contributed to Arch's decision to install ExaGrid over the competition were value for the price, scalability, and support. "Scalability in particular is very important to us. We have an ExaGrid in each of two Bermudian data centers, and we're currently cross-replicating with the intention of adding another system shortly for disaster recovery. In addition, we have a system in Dublin and one in Zurich that also cross replicate. We've already expanded our ExaGrid system. All I had to do was add another device; we didn't need to do a forklift upgrade," he said. An added plus was the fact that ExaGrid works seamlessly with their existing backup application, Symantec Backup Exec.

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.

Backup Window Reduced by over 50% with ExaGrid

When Arch was backing up to tape, they had two drives and were limited to running just two backup jobs at a time. Now with the ExaGrid, they are running four to six at a time. With tape, Arch's backup window was exceeding 11 hours. Now backing up to the ExaGrid, their backup window is just 5 hours.

EXAGRID[™]

ExaGrid System Offers Unique Deduplication Approach

According to Smith, ExaGrid's approach to deduplication was yet another critical component in Arch's decision-making process. Because ExaGrid lands a full backup before commencing the deduplication process, the data is safely backed up as quickly as possible, and the compute-intensive deduplication is done post process. Other systems deduplicate as the data is being backed up, resulting in an unnecessarily lengthy backup window.

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.

User-Friendly Installation

"We didn't have to bring anyone in to do the installation," said Smith. "It was very simple, and my staff picked it up very quickly." Smith is pleased with the customer support he's received. When Arch has had technical questions or issues, they get addressed and resolved in a timely fashion.

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.

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.

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.

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