Architectural Nexus Designs Better Backup Strategy with ExaGrid

Customer Overview

Architectural Nexus is one the Intermountain West's principal architectural firms. The company offers sophisticated design and deep technical expertise with specialties in health care, research, education, resort and housing, commercial, religious and governmental projects. With more than 90 dedicated specialists, Architectural Nexus manages projects for a wide variety of companies and organizations. The Company's signature projects include the Huntsman Cancer Institute, Huntsman Cancer Hospital, New Student Housing at Brigham Young University, the Orthopaedic Center at the University of Utah, Salt Lake Community College Student Pavilion, and the University of Utah Eccles Critical Care Pavilion. The company is headquartered in Salt Lake City and has offices in Utah and Arizona.

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>
> **Kent Hansen**
> **Manager of**
> **Information Systems**
> **Architectural Nexus**

Retention and Growing Data Protection Requirements were Big Issues for Firm

Architectural Nexus is a fast growing architectural firm with a significant amount of data to protect. The company's IT department had been backing up its data using disk-to-disk-to-tape (D2D2T) technology but struggled daily with the system because it had run out of capacity. In addition, long backup times had begun to affect system performance.

"Retention was our immediate concern because we could only store three days of data on our old solution before it went to tape. We were also in the process of moving from AutoCAD to Revit, a next-generation, 3D CAD tool, and we expected our file sizes to increase dramatically," said Kent Hansen, manager of information systems at Architectural Nexus. "We needed a forward-looking, scalable solution that would enable us to get out of the rut of disk-to-disk-to-tape while increasing retention."

ExaGrid Provides Data Deduplication to Maximize Disk Space

Architectural Nexus selected an ExaGrid disk-based backup system and installed it in its Salt Lake City office. The ExaGrid system works alongside the company's existing backup application, Symantec's Backup Exec. "We were really blown away by ExaGrid's data deduplication technology, and it's working extremely well for us. Currently, we're able to keep ten weeks of data on the system," said Hansen. "We expect that we will quadruple the amount of data we need to back up once the Revit software is fully implemented.

ExaGrid's data deduplication technology does a fantastic job at reducing the amount of data we are backing up today and we are confident that it will help us reign in the amount of data we'll be looking at in the future."

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. ExaGrid is cost effective when a two-site system is used because its data deduplication technology moves only changes between sites, minimizing the amount of bandwidth needed.

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Full Backups Reduced from 30 Hours to 10 Hours, Staff Saves 15 Hours a Week in Tape Management

With its old D2D2T system, Architectural Nexus had been exceeding its backup windows on a nightly basis, and as a result, system performance suffered. Hansen said that since installing the ExaGrid system, Architectural Nexus has been able to reduce its backup times significantly, and weekly full backups have been reduced from 30 hours to 10 hours.

"We were going disk-to-disk every night and then to tape during the day, but we were constantly blowing out our backup window and our systems were slowing down considerably," said Hansen.

"Our backups are much more efficient with the ExaGrid system and we've reduced our reliance on tape."

The ExaGrid system is backed up to tape once a week but the company is considering purchasing a second system to replicate data and eliminate tape altogether. Hansen said that since installing the ExaGrid system, the IT staff has been able to save nearly 15 hours per week on tape management and administration.

"We have found the ExaGrid system very easy to manage. It works seamlessly with Backup Exec and the interface is intuitive and easy to use," said Hansen. "We've also had a terrific experience with ExaGrid's customer support. The support team is very responsive and knowledgeable about the product."

ExaGrid comes packaged as a turnkey appliance and was designed to be easy to deploy and manage and to deliver maximum uptime with redundant, hot-swappable components. All components are fully supported by ExaGrid's trained, in-house engineers dedicated to individual accounts.

Scalability to Meet Increased Backup Requirements

The ExaGrid system can easily be scaled to meet increased demand. 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 60TB 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.

"Because we expect our data to grow substantially in the coming months, we needed to be sure that the backup system we chose could grow as our demands grew. ExaGrid's GRID architecture will enable us to easily accommodate more and more data without forklifting the system," said Hansen. "Also, the fact that we can add a second system for data replication at some point in the future is a tremendous advantage and it will enable us to improve our disaster recovery capabilities when the time is right. The ExaGrid system helped solve our immediate backup issues

and we're confident that it will be able to handle our backup requirements 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.

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 byte-level data deduplication, delivering a disk-based solution that is more cost effective than standard SATA drives. ExaGrid's byte-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.

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