

Bloomingtondale Communications Dials In More Efficient Backups with ExaGrid

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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John Schneider
Network Administrator
Bloomingtondale
Communications

Customer Overview

Bloomingtondale Communications, Inc. offers a wide range of telecommunications services throughout the southwest Michigan area. The company serves approximately 2,400 households in the village of Bloomingtondale and parts of three Van Buren and Allegan county townships. In 1989, the company created Bloomingtondale Communications to handle the non-regulated communications needs of its customers. The company has recently launched its newest venture to deliver telephone service, digital television, and high speed Internet over fiber to the village of Paw Paw, Michigan.

Fast Growth Leads to Search for a New Solution

Bloomingtondale Communications is a small, fast growing telecommunications provider that recently began competing with larger, national companies for some of the region's telecommunications business. The company's fast growth led to increased pressures on Bloomingtondale Communications IT staff to make its IT processes more efficient and to properly protect its data. The company had been backing up its servers to tape, but the growing amount of data was pushing the tape library's capacity and its IT staff had to deal with the resulting impact on administering effective and efficient backups.

"We were already struggling with how to meet our backup demands with tape and we were planning to double both the amount of data and number of servers that needed to be backed up," said John Schneider, network administrator for Bloomingtondale Communications, Inc. "We knew that our tape library couldn't handle any more data and we were also tired of manually dealing with tape."

Schneider was spending 10 to 20 hours per week managing the firm's backups with tape. With expansion plans looming, Bloomingtondale Communications decided to look for a new

approach to backup and narrowed down its choices to ExaGrid's disk-based backup system and a competing solution.

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Integration with CA ARCserve Backup Saves Time, Money

Bloomingtondale Communications purchased an ExaGrid system for its primary site in Bloomingtondale and a second ExaGrid for disaster recovery in Paw Paw, MI. The ExaGrid system operates alongside the firm's existing backup application, CA ARCserve® Backup.

"The ExaGrid system works seamlessly with CA ARCserve Backup. It's a huge advantage that the two products work so well together because we were able to retain our investment with CA ARCserve Backup and didn't have to purchase any additional licenses or change our backup processes," said Schneider. "We had been experiencing lots of problems managing backups to tape prior to installing ExaGrid. Since installing ExaGrid, we've streamlined administration and haven't had any issues at all."



Schneider now estimates he spends between one and two hours per week managing backups, down from between 10 to 20 hours he had been spending with tape. Bloomingdale Communications has been able to completely eliminate tape, and has seen its backup windows significantly reduced. With its tape library, the company had been performing full backups of the company's 12 servers in 16 hours, and daily incremental backups were performed in three hours. With the combined CA ARCserve Backup/ExaGrid solution, CA ARCserve Backup flies - the company has been able to back up all of its 29 servers in just over 25 hours, and performs incremental backups in just six hours.

Rave Reviews Lead to ExaGrid

"In doing our research, we spoke with other ExaGrid customers and got rave reviews about the system, said Schneider. "The customer we spoke with said that the ExaGrid system worked so well that he spent almost no time managing backups. We have experienced the same thing. Our backups are now automatic and the ExaGrid system has made us more efficient because we don't have to spend all of our time managing backups or dealing with tape."

Data De-duplication Increases Retention, Speeds Replication Between Sites

BTC-BCI has been able to keep nearly five months of backups on its ExaGrid system due to the compression achieved through ExaGrid's data de-duplication technology. ExaGrid's data de-duplication technology also speeds the transmission of backup data between the company's datacenter in Bloomingdale and its disaster recovery site in Paw Paw.

"We were concerned about monopolizing the bandwidth between our two sites, but ExaGrid's data de-duplication technology makes the transmission so efficient that we can't even tell when backup jobs are being sent over the network," said Schneider.

ExaGrid's data de-duplication technology 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 de-duplication is performed post-process after the data is stored to reduce data. When used at a second site for disaster recovery, ExaGrid is extremely efficient because its byte-level data de-duplication technology moves only changes, requiring minimal WAN bandwidth.

GRID Architecture Provides Scalability to Grow as Data Grows

Because Bloomingdale Communications is growing quickly, scalability was also an important factor in choosing ExaGrid.

"The fact that we can easily add capacity by plugging in another ExaGrid system is a great feature," said Schneider. "We know we have an upgrade path with ExaGrid and we won't have to replace the system anytime soon to meet increased backup needs." ExaGrid's GRID architecture enables organizations to scale their ExaGrid systems as data grows. When plugged into a switch, additional ExaGrid systems virtualize into one another, appearing as a single system to the backup server, and load balancing of all data across servers is automatic.

Excellent Customer Support Experience

ExaGrid assigns a dedicated support engineer to each account, and the engineer monitors each system for potential issues. When Bloomingdale's ExaGrid system suffered a hard drive failure, Schneider proactively received a call from ExaGrid's support engineer.

"I received a call early on a Monday morning from ExaGrid's customer support engineer letting me know that a hard drive had failed and they had already shipped a new one. I hadn't even had time to check my email yet," said Schneider. "ExaGrid's support is outstanding. We have a relationship with a support engineer who is familiar with our installation and who is always accessible. That gives us a great deal of comfort."

ExaGrid and CA ARCserve Backup

CA ARCserve Backup delivers comprehensive data protection across multiple hardware and software platforms. Combining innovative disk backup with powerful, integrated anti-virus and encryption tools, CA ARCserve Backup is one of the most secure "out-of-the-box" backup solutions offered today. Its proven technology — unified by a single, easy-to-use interface — enables multi-tiered protection driven by business goals and policies.

ExaGrid complements and integrates seamlessly with CA ARCserve Backup to provide faster and more reliable backups and restores. Organizations using CA ARCserve Backup can look to ExaGrid as an alternative to tape for nightly backups. ExaGrid sits behind existing backup applications, such as CA ARCserve Backup, providing faster and more reliable backups and restores.

Use cases have shown that customers running CA ARCserve Backup on ExaGrid have experienced a 30-80 percent reduction in their backup windows. In a network running CA ARCserve Backup, 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 CA ARCserve Backup to the ExaGrid system for onsite backup to disk.

Top Benefits:

- High performance backup and restore via CA ARCserve Backup's integrated backup to disk technology
- World-class anti-virus and encryption via CA ARCserve Backup
- Data reduction via ExaGrid's unique byte-level data de-duplication and compression technology
- Complete elimination of tape with 2nd ExaGrid system (offsite)
- Reduced backup window and reduced costs – combined solution benefit

Intelligent Data Protection

ExaGrid's turnkey disk-based backup system combines high quality SATA drives with byte-level data de-duplication, delivering a disk-based solution that is more cost effective than standard SATA drives. ExaGrid's byte-level data de-

duplication technology stores only the changes from backup to backup instead of storing full file copies, reducing the amount of disk space 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.

ExaGrid is easy to install and use and works seamlessly with popular backup applications, so organizations can retain their investment in existing applications.

ExaGrid can be used at a primary site and at a second site to supplement or eliminate offsite tapes with a live data repository or for disaster recovery. When a second site is used, the cost savings are even greater because ExaGrid's byte-level data de-duplication technology moves only changes, requiring minimal WAN bandwidth.

For more information about ExaGrid, please visit us at www.exagrid.com or call us at 1-800-868-6985.

About CA

CA (NYSE: CA), one of the world's largest independent software companies, provides software solutions to unify and simplify™ IT management. With CA's Enterprise IT Management (EITM) vision and expertise, organizations can more effectively govern, manage and secure IT to optimize business performance and sustain competitive advantage. Founded in 1976, CA serves customers in virtually every country in the world. For more information, please visit www.ca.com. CA's Recovery Management solutions automate, integrate and simplify critical data protection and recovery tasks — making business-critical information and applications continuously available, people more productive and companies more efficient, flexible and risk-resistant. For more information about CA ARCserve Backup, contact your preferred CA authorized reseller, your local CA Representative at 1-800-Call-CAI (1-800-225-5224), or visit www.ca.com/recovery.

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.