BroMenn Healthcare Eliminates Backup Pain with ExaGrid

Customer Overview

For well over 100 years, parts of the BroMenn Healthcare System have been touching the lives of those living in central Illinois. While advances in technology have greatly changed how we treat conditions, our personal attention to our patients has remained constant.

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> **Scott Hargus**
> **IT Manager**
> **BroMenn Healthcare**

Unacceptable RTO with a Tape-based Solution Drove the Need for a Disk-based Backup Appliance

The BroMenn Healthcare System serves an eight-county area in central Illinois. The company backs up typical hospital-related data files including SQL databases, patient records, MS Office documents, and PDFs, on several physical servers and many virtual servers. For several years they were staging their backups daily to their SAN, then offloading to tape.

According to Information Technology Manager Scott Hargus, his team spent hours every week troubleshooting and managing the company's tape libraries. When tickets came in from their end-users needing to recover data it was a long drawn out process. It could take days bacause tapes would have to first be retrieved from offsite storage. So BroMenn Healthcare had a very difficult time meeting the end-user requirements with the previous system that was only staging to disk, then ultimately copying to tape for longer term retention. The final straw was an incident where Finance needed some data to complete a critical month-end process and they needed it fast. IT struggled to recover the data quickly enough due to the limitations of recovering data from a tape-based solution.

"We needed to solve this problem. We wanted to eliminate tape costs and administration hassles and streamline our data recovery process. Disk backup with deduplicaton was on our strategic plan, but the time was now to move on it," said Hargus.

After some extensive research into different solutions that used either post-process or inline deduplication methods, BroMenn Healthcare decided to implement ExaGrid's disk backup with deduplication to manage its backups and restores. The ExaGrid system works along with the company's existing backup application, CommVault Simpana. For Disaster Recovery, the company implemented a second ExaGrid system to replicate backups automatically at their secondary data center located 35 miles away.

"Key factors in selecting ExaGrid were the speed of the post-process deduplication method and the GRID scalability. We wanted a system that was cost effective but also gave us the backup and restore performance and retention we required not just for today, but for tomorrow as our data inevitably grows. ExaGrid does all that and more," said Hargus.

Seamless Point-and Click Data Recovery and Many Saved Man-hours

According to Hargus, ExaGrid's unique data deduplication technology and architecture are important for his requirements. 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 byte-level data deduplication technology moves only changes, requiring minimal WAN bandwidth.

"For us, the seamless recovery process is priceless. It's great to implement better technology to save IT time and headaches, but when the value is seen by our end-users, the payback is ten-fold. Our users are amazed at how quickly and smoothly we can service their needs for data." said Hargus. "With the ExaGrid in place, data recovery is no longer a big issue for IT or our users. Also, we have done an analysis and are very pleased that we will be saving several hundred man-hours in reduced tape administration and troubleshooting duties. Add that to our reduced expenses on tape media and we are certainly seeing a nice ROI on the product," said Hargus.

Speed, Scalability to Grow as Company Data Grows and Top-Notch Customer Support

A testament to how fast the post-process approach to deduplication is would be the fact that after installing the ExaGrid system, their backup times were just as fast, if not faster than when they were staging to disk directly. That's because the full backup is landed on the disk, at the speed of disk. There is no faster way.

"The final selling point for us was not just the price," said Hargus. "But the fact that the most recent backup is kept in it's full, non-deduplicated form. This means that we don't have to re-hydrate the backup in order to make a tape copy. When we first implemented the system we needed to continue to make weekly tape copies. It just didn't make sense to deduplicate it, then turn around and re-hydrate it to make a tape copy. It's much faster and made more sense to us."

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 100TB 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.

ExaGrid's trained, in-house engineers provide dedicated support to individual accounts.

"ExaGrid's support has been exemplary," said Hargus. "Their knowledge of the system and our environment has really been helpful and they go the extra mile to optimize the backup process even if it's something that doesn't involve ExaGrid directly. My customer support engineer in particular has been phenomenal."

ExaGrid and CommVault Simpana

CommVault Simpana software contains extensive capabilities to simplify the management of backup media resources. Galaxy software writes backup data to a broad collection of storage devices, including disk as a media target. This ability to write to magnetic disk as a functional equal of all other media types while exploiting the random access nature of the disk media sets Simpana software apart.

Organizations using CommVault Simpana can look to ExaGrid as an alternative to tape for nightly backups. ExaGrid sits behind existing backup applications, such as Simpana, providing faster and more reliable backups and restores. In a network running Simpana, 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 offers the only disk-based backup appliance with data deduplication purpose-built for backup that leverages a unique architecture optimized for performance, scalability and price. The combination of post-process deduplication, most recent backup cache, and GRID scalability enables IT departments to achieve the shortest backup window, fast and reliable restores, fast tape copy, rapid disaster recovery, and data growth without performance degradation or forklift upgrades. With offices and distribution worldwide, ExaGrid has more than 1,700 systems installed at more than 500 customers, and more than 130 published customer success stories.

ExaGrid servers can be used at primary and secondary sites and a second site 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.

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**.