



Scalable ExaGrid System Helps Union Meet Growing Backup Requirements



USA

Key Benefits:

- Works seamlessly with Veeam and Dell EMC NetWorker
- System has been scaled twice to grow with CSEA's data volume and 'couldn't be easier'
- Restores that used to take hours from tape now take just minutes
- Easy-to-manage appliance with intuitive interface saves time

"Our data has grown tremendously in the past four years – we never could have backed it all up to tape."

Patricia Neal

Production Support Specialist

Customer Overview

The Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA) is one of the largest employee unions in the United States, representing nearly 220,000 members state-wide. CSEA members perform a wide range of essential work throughout the state and local government agencies as well as private sector. CSEA is a member-run union, democratically controlled by member volunteers in more than 750 local chapters throughout the state.

Infrastructure Upgrade Led to Decision to Replace Tape with ExaGrid

CSEA's datacenter was largely run on OpenVMS systems backed up to tape, but when the organization began moving towards virtualization, the union's IT staff decided it was time to look for a more robust solution capable of reducing backup windows and the amount of time spent managing tape.

"Tape was always challenging because it required a lot of monitoring and maintenance on a daily basis, and it took up a lot of space," said Patricia Neal, production support specialist at CSEA. "When we upgraded our environment, we decided to look for a disk-based solution that could reduce our reliance on tape and efficiently back up both physical and virtual servers."

CSEA purchased the ExaGrid system after also looking at a unit from Dell EMC Data Domain.

"The ExaGrid system fit easily into our infrastructure, and it works seamlessly with our backup applications, Dell EMC NetWorker and Veeam," said Neal. "One of the other things we looked closely at was scalability. We knew that our data was likely to grow over time, so we wanted to ensure that our backup solution would be able to scale to handle increasing amounts of data."

Scale-out Architecture Provides Required Scalability

ExaGrid's award-winning scale-out architecture provides customers with a fixed-length backup window regardless of data growth. Its unique disk-cache Landing Zone allows for the fastest backups and retains the most recent backup in its full unduplicated form, enabling the fastest restores.

ExaGrid's appliance models can be mixed and matched into a single scale-out system allowing a full backup of up to 2.7PB with a combined



ingest rate of 488TB/hr, in a single system. The appliances automatically join the scale-out system. Each appliance includes the appropriate amount of processor, memory, disk, and bandwidth for the data size. By adding compute with capacity, the backup window remains fixed in length as the data grows. Automatic load balancing across all repositories allows for full utilization of all appliances. Data is deduplicated into an offline repository, and additionally, data is globally deduplicated across all repositories.

This combination of capabilities in a turnkey appliance makes the ExaGrid system easy to install, manage, and scale. ExaGrid's architecture provides lifetime value and investment protection that no other architecture can match.

CSEA originally purchased its first ExaGrid appliance approximately four years ago and has expanded the system twice since then by adding units to the scale-out system. Neal said that the organization is considering expanding the system again in the coming fiscal year to handle expected data growth.

"Expanding the ExaGrid system really couldn't be easier. After racking the system up, I call into our ExaGrid support engineer, and he guides me through the configuration steps. It takes only about an hour to add another unit to our system. It's that simple," she said.

Fast Backups, Powerful Data Deduplication Reduces Amount of Data Stored

The ExaGrid system ensures fast backup times by sending data directly to a landing zone before deduplicating it. At CSEA, data is deduplicated at an average of 12:1, and backups are completed in less than 13 hours each night.

“Our data has grown tremendously in the past four years. Our backup jobs are all completed by the time we come in each morning,” Neal said. “It’s great to have so much data on hand and easily accessible when I need to do a restore. I can restore a file in minutes from the ExaGrid; with tape it would take hours. Now without too much strain on our network, I can move data off the ExaGrid to tape for offsite storage but without the pressure because all the backups have already completed.”

ExaGrid’s turnkey disk-based backup system combines enterprise drives with zone-level data deduplication, delivering a disk-based solution that is far more cost effective than simply backing up to disk with deduplication or using backup software deduplication to disk. ExaGrid’s patented zone-level deduplication reduces the disk space needed by a range of 10:1 to 50:1, depending on the data types and retention periods, by storing only the unique objects across backups instead of redundant data. Adaptive Deduplication performs deduplication and replication in parallel with backups. As data is being deduplicated to the repository, it is also replicated to a second ExaGrid site or the public cloud for disaster recovery (DR).



Streamlined Management, ‘Fantastic’ Customer Support

“The ExaGrid system’s interface is intuitive, and the unit is extremely easy to manage, especially compared to the nightmare of managing tape,” said Neal. “Also, support has been fantastic, and we have a very good relationship with our engineer. He’s experienced and is readily available to answer any question that comes up.”

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.

“The ExaGrid system works as advertised, and that’s not always the case with technology products,” said Neal. “It’s easy to manage, and it saves us a tremendous amount of time and aggravation each day because we’re confident in the quality of our backups and in our ability to restore data. Its easy scalability positions us well for the future.”

ExaGrid and Veeam

Veeam’s backup solutions and ExaGrid’s Tiered Backup Storage combine for the industry’s fastest backups, fastest restores, a scale-out storage system as data grows, and a strong ransomware recovery story – all at the lowest cost.

ExaGrid and Dell NetWorker

Dell NetWorker provides a complete, flexible and integrated backup and recovery solution for Windows, NetWare, Linux and UNIX environments. For large datacenters or individual departments, Dell EMC NetWorker protects and helps ensure the availability of all critical applications and data. It features the highest levels of hardware support for even the largest devices, innovative support for disk technologies, storage area network (SAN) and network attached storage (NAS) environments and reliable protection of enterprise class databases and messaging systems.

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

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.