

Medical Center Replaces Tape with ExaGrid, Reduces Backup Window by 70%

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



Chan Soon-Shiong
Medical Center
at Windber

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Adam Stahl
Dir. of Information Technology

Key Benefits:

- Backup window reduced by 70%
- Time savings equates to a month out of each year dealing with backup issues
- Backups are now ‘tight and efficient’
- Jobs complete consistently
- Fast backups reduce network load
- Flexibility to increase retention, if needed
- ‘Best in class’ backup decision

Customer Overview

Chan Soon-Shiong Medical Center at Windber is a nonprofit community healthcare provider located in Pennsylvania that is dedicated to providing excellence in personalized, quality healthcare services through innovation, research and education in response to community needs.

ExaGrid Helps Fix Backup Issues ‘For Good’

Chan Soon-Shiong Medical Center was accustomed to backing up to tape libraries, but its backup strategy proved to be high maintenance, high cost, and high stress.

“We started off with two servers backing up our BridgeHead data, and each of those went to a separate tape library,” said Adam Stahl, Director of Information Technology at Chan Soon-Shiong Medical. “We also had an additional server and tape library for Veritas Backup Exec. We reduced it down to one server running Backup Exec and one server running Bridgehead to manage over 50TB of data. Our IT department continues to virtualize, and we have reached a short-term goal of 51% in our current environment.

“We thought that this different kind of backup model would save us money and efficiency, but there were a lot of issues. Once we put ExaGrid in place, it was like having a chalkboard and wiping it clean with no more backup issues anymore,” he said.

Stahl’s goal in his new position was to fix backup storage for good. “It’s a process, but we are off to a very solid start! The next step is to use ExaGrid for replication for our DR strategy with a new building we have in the works, about ten miles away.”

Time Savings Equates to One Month Per Year

At Chan Soon-Shiong Medical, troubleshooting time added up when dealing with backup storage concerns. “We save hours each day and that’s just on the typical task of checking all the reports to determine what

backed up and what didn’t, and we always had a couple of errors in addition to reruns and verifications. Combine that with the manual process of getting the old tapes from different buildings, and it’s easily one to two hours a day that’s being saved on our end. Just taking into account any kind of restore and overall IT effort, we’re saving a month out of the year with ExaGrid,” said Stahl.

“Switching over to ExaGrid appliances allows me to simply check my email to ensure jobs have completed. Once I see that, I know I’m golden for the rest of the day – no need to worry about backups. ExaGrid runs flawlessly!”

70% Reduction in Backup Window

Chan Soon-Shiong Medical’s backup of BridgeHead ran 24/7. There was always something getting backed up, and there were always open issues.

“We didn’t change any of the schedules when we switched over to ExaGrid, but what we’ve noticed is that jobs will back up and complete, and then the servers sit there waiting for the next job. So, it’s not a constant rotation getting backed up where the network is getting hammered. In the past, I would look at reports and see that things were getting pushed into the next day. Now, it’s tight and efficient,” said Stahl. “Overall, I’d say that we’ve seen a 70% reduction in our backup window, which greatly reduces our stress because we know every job completes.”

Backup Confidence and Insurance

“Since every job is completing, all that extra time is not being used. Eventually I will modify our schedule and throw in extra incremental

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backups if I need to, but I have a lot more options. We can now meet medical standards, whereas with tape, we were only hitting the bare minimum. I have the flexibility with ExaGrid to actually increase our retention at any time," said Stahl.

"We don't have to buy tapes or more disk space because of dedupe, so from a storage standpoint, we are covered. We see an average 12:1 dedupe ratio, which is excellent. We're looking at a 'big bang' approach here; we're trying to implement best practices and best-of-breed products for everything throughout the hospital as far as servers, storage, networking, and backups. We needed a solution that technically met all of our requirements in the medical field, and we couldn't find any flaws in ExaGrid's approach. Plus, we could use the same Veritas Backup Exec software that we had been using in the past, so we already had familiarity. Now I can enhance everything that we're doing.

"The biggest thing for me is that ExaGrid gives me peace of mind. It's a lifesaver when I can actually check reports and see that everything is backed up. I'm not having any of those worries where all of a sudden I have to do unplanned work, fixing whatever didn't back up the night before. It is really a blessing as far as time management goes – having that insurance that all your data is protected," Stahl said.

Installation by Necessity Proves Simple

"Craziest story is that we were going to schedule install down the road after some other projects were done, and then our one tape library went down! I was able to get it scheduled with our ExaGrid support engineer later that day. We fired it up and got everything configured and pointed over within an hour. I was thinking I'd be without backups for a couple of days. This spur of the moment install was kind of nice – it was an adrenalin shot to get ExaGrid up and running.

"The ExaGrid support model is unique, and I like having one person that I know is familiar with and aware of everything in our environment. We set everything up together, and it all works perfectly," he said.

As a small department, Chan Soon-Shiong Medical performs monthly tests, which tend to take hours for a successful restore. "With ExaGrid, I set a simple file restore for a user, where I had an

entire share, the full restore plus all the daily incrementals. I set it and sat at my desk and received an email when it was done. I didn't have to do anything. It kicked off right away, went to the appliance, and completed the restore," said Stahl.

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 assigned to individual accounts. The system is fully supported, and was designed and manufactured for maximum uptime with redundant, hot-swappable components.

ExaGrid and Veritas Backup Exec

Veritas Backup Exec provides cost-effective, high-performance, and certified disk-to-disk-to-tape backup and recovery – including continuous data protection for Microsoft Exchange servers, Microsoft SQL servers, 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 Veritas Backup Exec can look to ExaGrid as an alternative to tape for nightly backups. ExaGrid sits behind existing backup applications, such as Veritas Backup Exec, providing faster and more reliable backups and restores. In a network running Veritas 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 backup to disk.

GRID Architecture Provides Superior Scalability

ExaGrid uses a GRID-based configuration, where each appliance contains not just disk but also processing power, memory, and bandwidth. When the system needs to expand, additional appliances are simply attached to the GRID. This type of configuration allows the system to maintain all the aspects of performance as the amount of data grows, and you only pay for what you need when you need it. In addition, as new ExaGrid appliances are added to the GRID, the system automatically load balances available capacity, maintaining a virtual pool of storage that is shared across the GRID.

About ExaGrid

ExaGrid provides backup storage with a unique landing zone and scale-out architecture. The landing zone provides for the fastest backups, restores and instant VM recoveries. The scale-out architecture includes full appliances in a scalable GRID and provides for a fixed-length backup window as data grows, eliminating expensive forklift upgrades. Learn more at www.exagrid.com.

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