

California Department of Veterans Affairs Adds Scalability and Reduces Dependence on Tape via ExaGrid's Disk-Based Backup with Deduplication System

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Network Engineer
Department of Veterans Affairs
State of California

Customer Overview

The California Department of Veterans Affairs (CDVA) was created to provide California veterans and their families with aid and assistance in presenting their claims for veterans' benefits under the laws of the United States; to provide them with beneficial opportunities through direct low-cost loans to acquire farms and homes; and to provide the state's aged or disabled veterans with rehabilitative, residential, and medical care and services in a home-like environment at the California Veterans Homes. This mission is based upon the philosophy that programs of benefits for veterans fulfill necessary, proper, and valid public purposes by promoting patriotism, by recognizing and rewarding sacrifice and service to country, and by providing needed readjustment assistance to returning veterans and their families, whose lives were interrupted when they responded to their country's call to military service.

Looking to Manage Growth and Move Away from Tape

The California Department of Veterans Affairs (CDVA) typically performed two full backups per week, with daily incremental backups in between, and with retention for up to seven to ten years depending on the data set. Prior to the ExaGrid solution, the CDVA relied exclusively on tape, but the amount of tape was growing too large and was too unreliable. "Everything was done on tape," said one of the network engineers at the CDVA, "but tape is slow, tape fails, and then the restore process takes forever."

The CDVA was also planning to make the move from tape to disk because their backup window was becoming completely unmanageable, and they were physically moving too many tapes around. They also have been experiencing tremendous growth, so they really needed to get a solution in place that would allow them to grow their business without worrying about a 'rip and replace' solution that would need to be upgraded in the next two years.

The CDVA evaluated a number of possible solutions to improve their data protection process and decided to move to a disk-based backup approach. "We wanted to make our shop more efficient in terms of

backup and recovery," said the CDVA. "We're in the 21st century, and disk storage is the way to go now."

The CDVA decided on ExaGrid for their solution due to ExaGrid's scalable architecture. "Just seeing how the architecture works for ExaGrid was phenomenal, so we were sold on the product and brought it into our department"

Faster Backups, Faster Restores, Disaster Recovery Protection, and Scalability with a Two-Site ExaGrid solution

The CDVA decided on a two-site solution, deploying a 10TB ExaGrid system at their headquarters in Sacramento, CA and another 10TB ExaGrid system at their remote facility in Yountville, CA. "We looked at other solutions, but we chose ExaGrid because of how scalable it is, the way that the grid system works - you just add another node to the grid as your data grows," said the CDVA.

The ExaGrid appliances replicate data between the two sites, enabling a cross-site disaster recovery solution. The ExaGrid system works alongside the CDVA's existing backup application, Symantec Backup Exec.



ExaGrid's data deduplication 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 and restore performance because data is written directly to disk, and data deduplication is performed post-process after the data is stored to reduce data.

ExaGrid's disk-based backup with deduplication not only saves capacity for storing backups, but also brings a 50 to 1 WAN efficiency ratio for transferring a copy of that data to an off-site location for disaster recovery protection. This makes it very easy for the CDVA to back up data at each of their two sites and then replicate that data to the other site for disaster recovery protection.

As the CDVA's data grows, the ExaGrid can easily be expanded to handle additional data. ExaGrid's GRID computing software makes the system highly scalable, and different sized configurations can be mixed and matched into a single GRID system with capacities of up to 100TB. Once virtualized, they appear as a single system to the backup server, and load balancing of all data across servers is automatic.

Easy to Install, Outstanding Customer Support

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. "ExaGrid's customer support is a big differentiator," said the CDVA.

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.

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.