EXAGRID®

Community College Gets Instant VM Recoveries with Veeam and ExaGrid

USA

Key Benefits:

- Integration between Veeam and ExaGrid provides fast VM recovery

- When primary storage is unavailable, a VM can be run from ExaGrid's landing zone

- Veeam and ExaGrid customer support teams are well versed in each other's products

- Backups are 'extremely fast'

- CVCC now has DR protection it can count on

"The combination of ExaGrid and Veeam is powerful. We're now more confident in our ability to properly back up our data, and if disaster strikes, we know we can quickly and easily restore individual files or entire VMs."

Paul Watkins
IT Manager

Customer Overview

Catawba Valley Community College is an accredited comprehensive North Carolina community college serving Catawba and Alexander counties. Approximately 4,500 students are enrolled in college credit courses and between 10 and 12,000 students enroll each year in short-term, continuing education courses. The college offers programming in Hickory, Newton and Taylorsville and in many community and workplace locations.

Data Loss Drives New Backup Infrastructure

The IT department at Catawba Valley Community College decided to look for a new backup solution for its virtual environment after suffering a major data loss.

"Our backup strategy for our virtual environment was spotty at best. We had a two-node VMware solution hosted on hardware that was becoming increasingly unstable. Eventually, it got to the point where the hardware was unrecoverable and so was the data. We lost a lot of data and had to rebuild pretty quickly," said Paul Watkins, IT manager at Catawba Valley Community College. "That data loss was the catalyst for us to take our backups more seriously, and we immediately began looking for a new solution."

ExaGrid and Veeam Deliver Strong Data Deduplication, Fast Recoveries

Watkins said that the first step in the process was to evaluate and select a best-of-breed backup solution designed for virtual environments, and after doing some research, the CVCC IT team decided on Veeam Backup & Recovery. The team then chose ExaGrid as its backup target after a strong recommendation by Veeam.

"We liked the tight integration between ExaGrid and Veeam," said Watkins. "Also, we looked carefully at how the two products work together to deliver high rates of deduplication and the speed and ease of recoveries."

Data sent through Veeam to the ExaGrid system is first deduplicated by Veeam and then is deduplicated again by the ExaGrid system.

Veeam uses changed block tracking to perform a level of data deduplication. ExaGrid allows Veeam deduplication and Veeam dedupe-friendly compression to stay on. ExaGrid will increase Veeam's deduplication by a factor of about 7:1

to a total combined deduplication ratio of 14:1, reducing the storage required and saving on storage costs up front and over time.

Watkins said CVCC has also been impressed with how fast VMs can be recovered by using the two products together.

ExaGrid and Veeam can instantly recover a file or VMware virtual machine by running it directly from the ExaGrid appliance in the event that the file is lost, corrupted or encrypted or the primary storage VM becomes unavailable. This instant recovery is possible because of ExaGrid's Landing Zone – a high-speed disk cache on the ExaGrid appliance that retains the most recent backups in their complete form. Once the primary storage environment has been brought back to a working state, the VM backed up on the ExaGrid appliance can then be migrated to primary storage for continued operation.

"Because of our experience losing data, we were particularly interested in fast VM recoveries. Instant VM Recovery enables us to recover from a disaster significantly faster than with other solutions because we can restore entire VMs from the landing zone with 'point and click' access," said Watkins. "And because the ExaGrid backs up the data to a landing zone, our backup times are extremely fast. We can back up our Hyper-V cluster in less than six hours."

Helpful, Knowledgeable Support Helps Keep Solution Running Trouble-free

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.

Watkins said he's found the support engineer who is assigned to CVCC's account to be proactive and knowledgeable.

"Our support engineer has been extremely helpful. In fact, she recently contacted us to update the system and then performed the upgrade remotely. That level of support is uncommon these days," he said. "Our ExaGrid support engineer and the engineer on the Veeam side are both experienced with each other's products, which really reduces the finger-pointing and makes things more efficient."

Easy Scalability with Scale-out Architecture

Currently, CVCC only backs up its virtual infrastructure to the ExaGrid system, but Watkins said that the college is considering moving its physical server backups to the ExaGrid system in the future.

"One of the nice things about the ExaGrid is that we can take advantage of its scale-out architecture to easily expand the system to handle more data or more servers in the future," he said. "We're considering replacing tape in the future if our budget allows."

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 undeduplicated 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.

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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.

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**.