

Central Minnesota Credit Union Banks on ExaGrid for Faster Backups and Restores

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Mike Hinnenkamp
Network Administrator
Central Minnesota
Credit Union

Customer Overview

Central Minnesota Credit Union (CMCU) is a member-owned, not-for-profit financial cooperative. Chartered in 1939, CMCU offers a complete line of financial services with 10 branch offices located throughout Central Minnesota. CMCU has over 35,000 members and assets in excess of \$500 million.

Slow Backups, Tedious Tape Drive Maintenance Force New Solution

The IT staff at CMCU had grown tired of long backup times caused by tape and the constant maintenance and upkeep required by its tape drives.

“Dealing with tape was so cumbersome and inefficient. We were tired of maintaining our tape drives and were constantly transporting tapes back and forth between our data center and the branch office where we keep our tapes,” said Mike Hinnenkamp, network administrator at CMCU. “We finally decided to look for a new backup approach that could reduce our reliance on tape and provide off-site replication to improve our disaster recovery.”

After looking at several different approaches, CMCU decided to look at disk-based backup solutions with data deduplication from both ExaGrid and EMC Data Domain.

“We wanted a solution that could be centrally managed. As it turned out, that was the big difference between the two products. With ExaGrid, we found that we could have our two locations managed by a single interface with error reporting and all the other bells and whistles we were looking for.

ExaGrid Works in Existing Environment

CMCU purchased a two-site ExaGrid system and installed one at its main datacenter and a second ExaGrid at a remote site. The

systems work with the credit union’s existing backup application, Symantec Backup Exec, and data is automatically replicated between the two systems each night.

“The ExaGrid system works extremely well with Backup Exec. Some of the other solutions we looked at weren’t as tightly integrated with Backup Exec or they would have required that we purchase other pieces of software. The ExaGrid fit right into our existing infrastructure, and it was more cost effective because we were able to save on additional licensing,” said Hinnenkamp.

Backup Times Reduced from 13 Hours to 90 Minutes, Faster Restores

Since installing the ExaGrid system, Hinnenkamp reports that backup times have been reduced from 13 hours with tape to 90 minutes with the ExaGrid system. Restores are also much faster.

“It’s amazing how fast our backups are now, and restores are quick too. With tape, we had to request tapes from offsite storage and then go through the whole process of restoring data. With the ExaGrid, we can restore information with the touch of a button,” said Hinnenkamp.

Data Deduplication Maximizes Disk Space

Mike Hinnenkamp said that ExaGrid’s data deduplication technology significantly reduces the data that the credit union keeps on the system.



“ExaGrid’s post-process data deduplication technology does a wonderful job at reducing our data, and we’re currently seeing average ratios of 45:1. We have 20TB of data on the ExaGrid system, and it’s only taking up 615GB of space, so we’re able to retain lots of data in case we need it for restores.”

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.

Easy to Install and Maintain

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 dedicated to individual accounts. The system is fully supported and was designed and manufactured for maximum uptime with redundant, hot-swappable components. “Installation was pretty straightforward. ExaGrid’s customer support engineer gave us a little help in configuring the two sites, and we were up and running. I like the fact that we have a dedicated support engineer who is familiar with our environment. We’ve had a very good experience with support. They’re very knowledgeable and responsive when we call in,” said Mike Hinnenkamp.

One of the main reasons that the credit union decided to look for a new backup solution was to reduce the amount of time the staff was spending on maintaining its tape drives. Hinnenkamp said that since installing the ExaGrid system, the IT staff spends virtually no time at all on maintenance.

“We used to spend a lot of time cleaning the tape drives and performing maintenance, but since we installed the ExaGrid system, we haven’t had to touch it. We’re also saving a lot of money on tapes too.” said Mike Hinnenkamp.

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.

Scalability to Meet Increased Demands

As the credit union’s data increases, the ExaGrid system can easily scale to accommodate more data. 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.

“The ExaGrid system is very flexible, and it’s been a great solution for us. The time we used to spend on managing and administering tape we can now spend on other, more important things. It’s taken the worry out of our backups,” Hinnenkamp said.

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.

Intelligent Data Protection

ExaGrid’s turnkey disk-based backup system combines high quality SATA drives with byte-level data deduplication, delivering a disk-based solution that is more cost effective than standard SATA drives. ExaGrid’s byte-level data deduplication technology stores only the changes from backup to backup instead of storing full file copies, reducing the amount of disk needed by a range of 10:1 to 50:1 or more, resulting in a solution that is 25 to 30% the cost of standard SATA drives. The ExaGrid system is easy to install and use and works seamlessly with popular backup applications, so organizations can retain their investment in existing applications and processes. ExaGrid servers can be used at primary and secondary sites 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.