

ExaGrid Delivers 84% Backup Window Reduction for City of Oregon

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



"Now that we're using ExaGrid, I spend almost no time at all on backups. I get an email each day letting me know that my backups ran successfully overnight and that's it – no tape hassles or unexpected hours spent fighting with backups."

Caris Rockey-Dykema
IT Manager
City of Oregon, Ohio

Key Benefits:

- Ease of expansion supported unexpected data center growth
- Expense and hassle of tape has been eliminated
- System is intuitive, simple to use, and runs 'flawlessly'

Customer Overview

The City of Oregon, Ohio is located on Lake Erie and is a suburb of Toledo. Its population is approximately 20,000. The Lake Erie location makes Oregon a very popular fishing vacation spot in the summer as well as the host of the Biggest Week in American Birding in the spring.

IT Department Struggled with Long Backup Times, Managing Tape

The City of Oregon's IT department supports nearly every department in the city, from emergency services to traffic management, and tax billing to building and zoning. Its lean IT staff consists of its IT manager, Caris Rockey-Dykema, and one part-time employee, so it's critical that operations and systems run as smoothly as possible.

According to Rockey-Dykema, the city had been backing up to tape, but it was difficult to find someone to reliably swap the tapes out when she wasn't available, and tape management was taking up more and more of her day. Finally, the decision was made to look for a disk-based backup system with data deduplication to streamline the city's backups and to improve reliability.

"We were sick of tape and needed a more 'hands off' approach to backup. Ease of use was also very important because I don't have the time for a big learning curve," said Rockey-Dykema.

Scalable Two-site ExaGrid System Works with Existing Backup Solution

After also looking at an EMC Data Domain solution, the city decided to purchase a two-site ExaGrid system to work alongside its existing backup application, Arcserve UDP. The primary system is located in its municipal building, and data is replicated each night to a second system installed eight miles away in the city's water treatment plant.

Rockey-Dykema said that when the city initially purchased the ExaGrid system, it

wasn't planning to expand the system so quickly, but the unexpected addition of new servers led them to make the decision to install another appliance to increase capacity.

"To be honest, I was pleasantly surprised at how easy it was to expand the system. The new appliance arrived on a Friday at 11:00 a.m., I emailed my ExaGrid customer support engineer to let her know that it was onsite, she emailed me right back, and we had it up and running by 3:00 p.m. that afternoon," said Rockey-Dykema.

ExaGrid uses a GRID-based configuration, so when the system needs to expand, additional appliances are attached to the GRID, bringing with them not only additional disk but also processing power, memory, and bandwidth. This type of configuration allows the system to maintain all the aspects of performance as the amount of data grows. In addition, as new ExaGrid appliances are added to the GRID, the ExaGrid automatically load balances available capacity, maintaining a virtual pool of storage that is shared across the GRID.

Intuitive System, Knowledgeable Customer Support

"Customer support and ease of use were key factors in choosing the ExaGrid system, and we haven't been disappointed," said Rockey-Dykema. "The system is intuitive and simple to use, and our customer support engineer is incredible. She's easy to reach by email or phone, and she's been able to quickly resolve any issue we've had or answer any question."

The ExaGrid system was designed to be easy to set up and maintain, and ExaGrid's

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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.

Fast Backup Times Deliver an 84% Backup Window Reduction

Rockey-Dykema said that before installing the ExaGrid system, the city used to run full backups each night using two tape libraries, and the process used to take in excess of 12 hours. Since installing the ExaGrid system, the city now runs full backups only once a week that take only two hours. Nightly incremental backups are completed in just minutes.

“Since we made the switch to ExaGrid, our backups simply fly. Our backups take only two hours now, and I don’t have to worry about swapping out tapes, which saves me tons of time,” she said. “Also, ExaGrid’s data deduplication is very effective at reducing our data, so we can store lots of information in a small footprint.”

ExaGrid combines standard compression along with zone-level 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. With ExaGrid disk-based backup appliances, backups are written directly to a disk landing zone, avoiding inline processing, ensuring the highest possible backup performance resulting in the shortest backup window.

Adaptive deduplication performs deduplication and replication in parallel with backups while providing full system resources to the backups for the shortest backup window. Available system cycles are utilized to perform deduplication and offsite replication for an optimal recovery point at the disaster recovery site. Once complete, the onsite data is protected and immediately available in its full unduplicated form for fast restores, VM Instant Recoveries and tape copies while the offsite data is ready for disaster recovery.

The city has also seen significant cost and time savings because it was able to completely eliminate tape. “We were spending over a hundred dollars a piece on tapes and we were

using ten tapes per day. We were also incurring the expense of sending them offsite. It was expensive and a huge hassle,” said Rockey-Dykema. “There was also a lot of legwork that needed to be done on my part. I was spending at least half an hour per day dealing with tape, even on a good day. On a bad day, when I had to recover a file or deal with a backup issue, it could take hours. Now that we’re using ExaGrid, I spend almost no time at all on backups. I get an email each day letting me know that my backups ran successfully overnight and that’s it – no tape hassles or unexpected hours spent fighting with backups. The ExaGrid runs flawlessly.”

ExaGrid and Arcserve UDP

Arcserve UDP protects and ensures availability of critical applications and data from large data centers to back offices, providing a wide range of support for disk technologies, Storage Area Networks (SAN) and Network Attached Storage (NAS) environments. Organizations using Arcserve UDP can look to ExaGrid as an alternative to tape for nightly backups. ExaGrid sits behind existing backup applications, such as Arcserve UDP, providing faster and more reliable backups and restores. In a network running Arcserve UDP, 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.

Intelligent Data Protection

ExaGrid’s turnkey disk-based backup system combines high quality disk drives with zone-level data deduplication, delivering a disk-based solution that is far more cost effective than simply backing up to straight disk. ExaGrid’s patented zone-level deduplication reduces the disk space needed by a range of 10:1 to 50:1 by storing only the unique bytes across backups instead of redundant data. Adaptive deduplication delivers the fastest backups, and as data grows, only ExaGrid avoids expanding backup windows by adding full appliances in a GRID. ExaGrid’s unique landing zone keeps a full copy of the most recent backup on disk, delivering the fastest restores, instant VM recovery, “Instant DR,” and fast tape copy. And, as data grows, ExaGrid saves up to 50% in total system costs compared to competitive solutions by avoiding costly “forklift” upgrades.

About ExaGrid Systems, Inc.

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.