Connecticut Transit Drives Better Backups with ExaGrid

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>
> **Rich Paterson**
> **Director of Information Services**
> **Connecticut Transit**

Customer Overview

Connecticut Transit (CTTRANSIT) is the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT)-owned bus service. CTTRANSIT Hartford operates over 30 local and 12 express bus routes, CTTRANSIT New Haven operates over 22 local routes, and CTTRANSIT Stamford operates 15 local bus routes. Headquartered in Hartford, CTTRANSIT employs over 900 employees and operates approximately 550 busses 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Time Consuming Backups, System Slowdowns

CTTRANSIT had been backing up its data nightly to tape, but the agency's rapid data growth and old, failing tape drives had led to time consuming backups and system slowdowns.

The heart of CTTRANSIT's IT operation is its fleet maintenance application, which tracks all of the agency's bus parts and contains its purchasing system. For CTTRANSIT, it's critical that the application be running at peak performance 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It's important that backup doesn't get in the way.

"Our nightly backup windows had grown to nearly 15 hours and we realized that we needed to find a better solution," said Rich Paterson, director of information services for CTTRANSIT. "Not only were our critical applications impacted, it was also a big drain on our IT staff to have to manage failing tape drives and tape."

Two-site ExaGrid System Provides Both Primary Backup and Disaster Recovery

CTTRANSIT worked with ExaGrid reseller TriAxis Storage Solutions to evaluate several different tape and disk-based backup solutions, and selected a two-site ExaGrid system to provide both primary backup and disaster recovery. CTTRANSIT installed one ExaGrid system in its Hartford datacenter and another in its Stamford facility. The two sites are connected via T1 line and the ExaGrid system works with CTTRANSIT's existing backup application, Symantec's Backup Exec™.

"Setting up the ExaGrid system was probably the easiest installation we've ever done," said Paterson. "We simply slid it into the rack and configuring it was fast and intuitive. It works beautifully with Backup Exec."

Bytel-level Data De-duplication Provides Fast Transmission of Data Between Sites

One of the main reasons CTTRANSIT selected the ExaGrid system was the strength of its data de-duplication and availability of a second site system for disaster recovery.

"After looking at several different approaches to backup, we realized that data de-duplication technology was a critical differentiator between products," said Paterson. "ExaGrid's byte-level data de-duplication provides more effective data compression than competitive products, and it makes it more efficient to send data between sites because the data de-duplication is more granular than products that de-duplicate data at the block level." ExaGrid's data de-duplication stores changes from backup to backup instead of storing full file copies. This unique approach reduces the disk space required by a range

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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 de-duplication is performed post-process after the data is stored. When a second site is used, the cost savings are even greater because ExaGrid's byte-level data de-duplication technology moves only changes, requiring minimal WAN bandwidth.

Faster Backups and Restores, Tape Completely Eliminated

Since installing the ExaGrid system, CTTRANSIT has been able to significantly reduce its backup times and has completely eliminated tape. The company had been sending tapes on a daily basis to its three different facilities for safekeeping but now has its data replicated between the two ExaGrid systems. "We no longer have to juggle tapes every morning from the autoloader or worry about where a tape is in case we need to perform a restore," said Paterson. "Also, restoring data from the ExaGrid is extremely fast and pain-free."

Industry Leading Scalability, Customer Support

Because CTTRANSIT's data is growing quickly, system scalability was an important factor in choosing a backup system. "The ExaGrid system should be easy to expand if we need additional capacity in the future," said Paterson. "Our data is constantly growing and scalability is critical. The ExaGrid system was designed so that it can easily scale up to meet increased backup demands."

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 60TB or more. Once virtualized, they appear as a single system to the backup server, and load balancing of all data across servers is automatic.

ExaGrid provides industry-leading technical support staffed by trained in-house engineers. ExaGrid is a turnkey solution that is fully supported and was designed and manufactured for maximum uptime with redundant, hot-swappable components.

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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 server for backup to disk.

Intelligent Data Protection

ExaGrid is the leader in cost-effective disk-based backup solutions. A scalable system that works with existing backup applications, ExaGrid is ideal for companies looking to quickly eliminate the hassles of tape backup while reducing their existing backup windows. ExaGrid's innovative approach minimizes the amount of data to be stored by providing standard data compression for the most recent backups along with byte-level data de-duplication technology for all previous backups. Customers can deploy ExaGrid at a primary site and at a second site to supplement or eliminate offsite tapes with a live data repository or for disaster recovery.

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**.