

# National Home Builder Simplifies Backups and Restores With ExaGrid Disk Backup With Deduplication

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

## David Weekley Homes

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Peter Mier  
Systems Engineer  
David Weekley Homes

## Customer Overview

Based in Houston, Texas, David Weekley Homes is one of the largest privately held home builders in America, building over 65,000 new homes in hundreds of communities throughout 14 cities.

## Economic Downturn Forces Company to Re-evaluate Data Protection Strategy

In a tough economic climate, many companies are facing budget and personnel cuts and being asked to do more with less. One of the most affected has been the housing market. David Weekley Homes, like many of its counterparts in the industry, had to make significant staff cuts that included the IT organization.

At the same time, the company was managing its data protection with a fully managed hosting provider which consumed a significant portion of its IT budget. Eventually, the company switched from a fully hosted provider to a co-location facility.

"With the slowdown in the housing market, we were paying too much for a hosted solution so it made sense to move from a fully-managed to a colocation facility and manage it ourselves," said Peter Mier, systems engineer.

## Selection of ExaGrid Disk Backup With Deduplication Helps Solidify Backups and Restores

According to Mier, not only was it costly to have its backups managed in this way, but the backups themselves were problematic. Using tape as its backup media, the company experienced long backup windows and unreliable backups.

"We were only getting a full backup of certain systems every three to four days at

best. We weren't getting daily incrementals or weekly fulls of our critical data," said Mier. "Our hosting provider was also unable to figure out how to backup our Exchange environment so we had to actually come up with the alternative solution to back up across the WAN to our headquarters while they tried to figure it out."

Mier said the company was not comfortable with not having its critical systems fully backed up daily so the organization decided to look for something faster and more dependable that would replicate and back up to disk but replicate to another site as well. The company evaluated several systems including solutions from EMC and HP ... eventually selecting ExaGrid's disk-based backup with deduplication solution.

"We wanted something that was quick to disk and affordable. The other solution providers wanted us to build a SAN infrastructure and use all these different types of software to use their deduplication and replication technology and this was not what we were looking for. We selected ExaGrid because it was really the only solution that gave us what we needed at a reasonable cost."

## Works with Existing Backup Application to Provide Smoother, More Reliable Backups

The ExaGrid works in conjunction with David Weekley's existing backup application, Symantec Backup Exec™.

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David Weekley Homes now runs incremental backups nightly and full backups each weekend of its critical data. With ExaGrid, the company has cut its backup times by about 75%.

## Data Deduplication Reduces Data, Speeds Restores

"ExaGrid's data de-duplication technology has helped to greatly reduce our data and speed up our restores," said Mier. "Because we have so much additional space on the server, we're considering moving over some of our other non-critical jobs."

ExaGrid combines last backup compression along with data de-duplication, which stores changes from backup to backup instead of storing full file copies. This unique approach has reduced David Weekley Homes' disk space required by a range of 10:1 to 24:1.

## Scalability for Growing Data Requirements

The ExaGrid system can easily be scaled to meet increased demand. 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.

"ExaGrid gives us peace of mind that we have a robust system in place that can easily scale as our organization and data requirements grow," said Mier. "Soon, we hope to have our satellite offices all leveraging the ExaGrid disk backup system."

## Top-notch Customer Support

ExaGrid's industry-leading customer support team is staffed by trained, in-house engineers who are dedicated to individual accounts. The ExaGrid system is fully supported and was designed and manufactured for maximum uptime with redundant, hot-swappable components.

"After the initial setup which wasn't that hard to do, we really have not had to call for much help. We even get notifications

if there is error of any sort so our devices are being monitored proactively by the ExaGrid team," said Mier. "The rare instance that we do need to chat with a person, I find the service to be a little more personal and the rep is always knowledgeable of our environment and gets the issue resolved quickly."

## 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.

## Intelligent Data Protection

ExaGrid's turnkey disk-based backup system combines high quality SATA drives with byte-level data de-duplication, delivering a disk-based solution that is more cost effective than standard SATA drives. ExaGrid's byte-level data de-duplication technology stores only the changes from backup to backup instead of storing full file copies, reducing the amount of disk space 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.

ExaGrid is easy to install and use and works seamlessly with popular backup applications, so organizations can retain their investment in existing applications. ExaGrid can be used at a primary site and at a second site to supplement or eliminate offsite tapes with a live data repository or for disaster recovery. 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.

**For more information about ExaGrid, please visit us at [www.exagrid.com](http://www.exagrid.com) or call us at 1-800-868-6985.**