

Dick Smith Automotive Group Accelerates Backup Speed and Gets it in Gear with Reliable Restores Using ExaGrid

Customer Overview

Dick Smith Automotive Group operates eight full-service auto dealerships in Columbia, Greenville, Lexington, and Moncks Corner, South Carolina. The dealerships sell Nissan, Chevrolet, Infiniti, Hyundai, Mitsubishi, Ford, Lincoln, and Mercury automobiles.

Concern about Ability to Restore Data from Tape Led to Search for a New Backup Solution

Dick Smith Automotive Group began looking for a new backup solution to increase the reliability of its restores and to streamline its backup processes. The company had been backing up its data to a combination of disk and tape, but the IT staff was tired of dealing with tape and having backup data in different places. They also worried about the dealership's ability to recover information in the event of an emergency.

"Our tape drive was getting older, and we were growing increasingly concerned about restores. We were tired of scrambling around looking for tapes only to find out that the data couldn't be restored because the tape was bad," said Nathan Elger, systems analyst for Dick Smith Automotive. "We needed a solution that would enable us to back up our data more efficiently while giving us a high degree of confidence that the data would be there if and when we needed it. We also wanted to get away from tape and move towards a disk-based solution. Tape is so cumbersome and labor-intensive. Disk is a much simpler, cleaner way to back up data."

ExaGrid System Simplifies and Speeds Backups and Restores

After looking at several different solutions, Dick Smith Automotive chose an ExaGrid disk-based backup system with data deduplication. The ExaGrid system works along with the company's existing backup application, Symantec Backup Exec.

"The ExaGrid is a great solution. We like the redundancy as well as the size of the appliance. It's not some massive appliance that needs a lot of attention," said Elger. "I also like that all our backups are in a single place, and I can monitor

all my backup jobs at once. I don't have to sift through a bunch of logs or check in several different locations to make sure that everything was backed up correctly. I get emails each day to let me know exactly what happened with my backups overnight. It's very efficient."

Elger said that since installing the ExaGrid system, restoring data is significantly faster, and he spends far less time managing and administering backups. The company's backup window has also been reduced.

"Restoring data is extremely easy with the ExaGrid. First, it's all point-and-click, and the operation itself is extremely fast. Second, we save a ton of time because we don't have to deal with tape," he said. "It's so nice to not have to worry about changing tapes, and it takes far less time to back up our data. We can back up more data than before, and I can even get a full backup of all of our virtual machines because the window is considerably smaller," he said.

Deduplication Maximizes Disk Space

"We're in the process of digitizing lots of accounting and administrative data, and our backups are getting larger and larger. The ExaGrid does a great job at reducing our data. As we put more information on the system, the data deduplication technology will play an even bigger role than it does today," Elger said.

As the dealership's backup data grows, the ExaGrid system can easily be expanded to handle 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.

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Nathan Elger
Systems Analyst
Dick Smith Automotive



ExaGrid's data deduplication technology maximizes disk space by automatically reducing the amount of data stored on the system. 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 Setup, Superior Customer Support

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.

"The installation process was fairly simple. It was just a matter of installing clients on servers and setting up job schedules. It really couldn't have been easier," he said. "We've also had a great experience with ExaGrid's customer support. We had fairly serious issues on the Backup Exec side, and our ExaGrid customer support engineer took ownership of the situation and worked with us every step of the way until the issues were resolved. He was extremely patient and knowledgeable and helped us through a rough patch. We've been thrilled with support."

Elger said that he's much more confident in the company's ability to recover information since installing the ExaGrid system, and he spends far less time managing backups.

"We have a high degree of confidence in the ExaGrid system, and it has made my job easier," said Elger.

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 our website www.ExaGrid.com or call us at 1-800-868-6985.

ABOUT EXAGRID

ExaGrid is the leader in cost-effective disk-based backup solutions. A highly scalable system that works with existing backup applications, the ExaGrid system 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 deduplication technology for all previous backups. Customers can deploy ExaGrid at primary and secondary sites to supplement or eliminate offsite tapes with live data repositories or for disaster recovery.

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