EXAGRID®

Gates Chili School District Learns to Streamline Backups

GATES CHILI
CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

USA

Key Benefits:

- Eliminates hard to manage tape process

- Significantly less cost

- Full backups reduced from 9 hours to 2

- Fast & easy restores

- Ease-of-use when installed and configured, you don't have to touch it

"Cost is always a major factor for purchases in a school district. The cost of the ExaGrid system was significantly less than the straight SATA solution, and ExaGrid was a great fit."

Phil Jay
Manager of IT Operations

Customer Overview

Gates Chili Central School District serves the towns of Gates and Chili, New York, covering a 26 square mile area in a community situated between Lake Ontario and the Finger Lakes. Gates Chili CSD serves nearly 3,700 students in four elementary schools for grades UPK-5, one grades 6-8 middle school and one grades 9-12 high school. Our diverse population, comprised of students from more than 20 different countries who speak more than 20 home languages, fosters an accepting and positive school culture.

Overwhelmed by data backup process

The IT staff at Gates Chili is responsible for managing the technology needs of the district, and wanted to ensure that the student, teacher, and administrative data was backed up effectively. The staff was overwhelmed by the data backup processes in place across the 9 buildings in the district. Each day, the district's nearly 30 servers were backed up individually with tape drives. Ideally, after the backups were completed, administrative personnel in each building would eject the tapes and store them, then set up new tapes to backup data for the day.
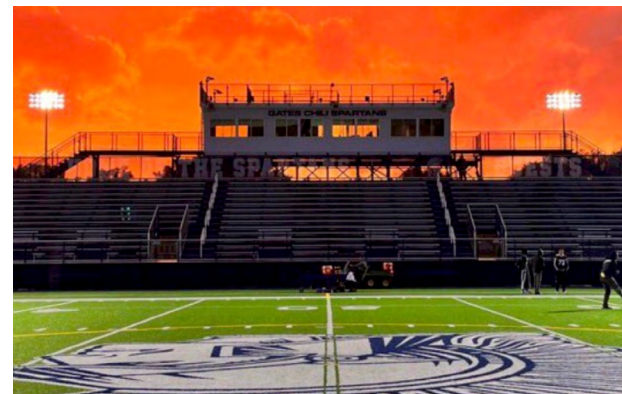
"It was hard to manage the tapes because it was difficult to get so many people to take ownership of the process. We would expect that the tapes would come into a central location, and they wouldn't make it there, and then the new tapes wouldn't get back out to them for upcoming backups. We really were just taking our chances," said Phil Jay, manager of IT operations for Gates Chili.

Budget Lesson

School budgets are notoriously tight, and Gates Chili is no exception. Although the backup system in place was cumbersome, budget restraints prevented them from upgrading to a more centralized system.

"We had been talking about moving towards a disk backup solution for three or four years, but the cost was simply prohibitive," said Jay. "If you put a computer in a classroom, the staff and the general public can see their tax dollars at work. With a disk-based backup system, it's behind the scenes and the value isn't as apparent." In fact, the quote for a SATA-based disk backup system was approximately $100,000.

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system was significantly less than the straight SATA solution, and ExaGrid was a great fit."

Gates Chili was also able to further its cost savings because ExaGrid acts as a disk- based target for its existing Veritas Backup Exec system. Additionally, because ExaGrid combines high quality SATA with unique byte-level delta data reduction technology, the total amount of data stored was drastically reduced, which significantly reduced the overall cost of the system.

Today, Gates Chili has approximately half of their servers backing up to ExaGrid, with the rest scheduled to be online shortly.

Shrinking backup window

Gates Chili has seen its backup windows reduce dramatically. Prior to installing ExaGrid, individual backups would take from 45 minutes for a standard server to eight to nine hours for backups in the art and technology departments. "We were maxing out tapes at certain points, and we'd have to make the decision to strip out some of the data just to complete the backup," said Jay.

Jay estimates that with ExaGrid, all backups, including the art department, are now taking a total of two to three hours to complete.

Additionally, since backups are automatic, the IT department no longer has to rely on a network of people to handle the tapes.

Fast restores

In a learning environment, mistakes happen, and files need to be restored quickly. "Our restores seem to go in waves," said Jay. "We can go for a while when we won't need to perform a restore, but then a student accidentally deletes a file, and we'll go through a period where we'll have 6 or 8 incidents within a couple of days." Sometimes the file can be recovered off the server, but ExaGrid's fast data recovery provides fast restores where restoring from tape was a time consuming and cumbersome process.

Intelligent Data Protection

ExaGrid's turnkey disk-based backup system combines enterprise drives with zone-level data deduplication, delivering a disk-based solution that is far more cost effective than simply backing up to disk with deduplication or using backup software deduplication to disk. ExaGrid's patented zone-level deduplication reduces the disk space needed by a range of 10:1 to 50:1, depending on the data types and retention periods, by storing only the unique objects across backups instead of redundant data. Adaptive Deduplication performs deduplication and replication in parallel with backups. As data is being deduplicated to the repository, it is also replicated to a second ExaGrid site or the public cloud for disaster recovery (DR).

Easy to Manage & Administer

The ExaGrid system is easy to install and use and works seamlessly with the industry's leading backup applications so that an organization can retain its investment in its existing backup applications and processes.

In addition, ExaGrid appliances can replicate to a second ExaGrid appliance at a second site or to the public cloud for DR (disaster recovery).

Because Gates Chili runs a lean operation with a number of servers in different locations, Jay appreciates ExaGrid's ease of use. "The backups are fast and it's easy to use. Once ExaGrid is installed and configured, you don't have to touch it," said Jay.

About ExaGrid

ExaGrid provides Tiered Backup Storage with a unique disk-cache Landing Zone that enables fastest backups and restores, a Repository Tier that offers the lowest cost for long-term retention and enables ransomware recovery, and scale-out architecture which includes full appliances with up to 2.7PB full backup in a single system.

Learn more at **www.exagrid.com**.