EXAGRID®

Hamilton College Chooses ExaGrid and Veeam for Backup Efficiency

USA

Key Benefits:

- 17:1 dedupe ratio uses fraction of disk capacity
- 'Top-notch' customer support
- Works seamlessly with both Veeam and Backup Exec
- DR site provides much needed reliability
- Massive time savings, 100% when using ExaGrid for replication

"I think the biggest thing that we've noticed here is the massive time savings. There's an ever-increasing demand on our time, and being able to get back the time spent managing and monitoring backups is huge – the difference is dramatic and remarkable! Now, we have more time to invest elsewhere in moving the organization forward."

Jesse Thomas
Network and Systems Admin

Customer Overview

Located in New York state, Hamilton College is one of the nation's oldest and most highly regarded liberal arts colleges. It is comprised of 1,850 students from nearly all 50 states and approximately 45 countries. The College is distinguished by a rigorous open curriculum, a need-blind admission policy, a deeply committed faculty who welcome close collaboration with students, and a focus on preparing students for lives of meaning, purpose and active citizenship.

Slow Backup Jobs, Failures, and Wasted Time Force Upgrade to ExaGrid

When Hamilton College virtualized its environment, the IT staff decided the time was right to upgrade its backup infrastructure in hopes of improving speed and eliminating tape. With its data constantly growing – upwards of 60TB – Hamilton was unable to finish nightly backup jobs, and restoring files had become quite time consuming.

Historically, Hamilton used Veritas Backup Exec in addition to a combination of a disk-based virtualized tape library and a traditional LTO tape library. As the number of servers along with the amount of data grew, the number of problems also increased. "It got to the point where we spent the majority of our week just monitoring the jobs, looking for failures and errors, and then manually re-running things to make sure that we were getting reliable backups. It seemed as though the on-call person, who was responsible for watching the backups, would often spend the majority of their time focused just on that activity," said Jesse Thomas, Network and Systems Administrator for Hamilton College.

Hamilton purchased a two-site ExaGrid solution and installed appliances in its main datacenter as well as offsite for disaster recovery. "I think the biggest thing that we've noticed here is the massive time savings. There's an ever-increasing demand on our time and being able to get back the time spent managing and monitoring backups is huge – the difference is dramatic and remarkable! Now, we have more time to invest elsewhere in moving the organization forward," said Thomas.

Thomas noted that now that all data goes through ExaGrid for backup storage, there are rarely any failures, and his team will take a quick glance at the dashboard daily to be proactive.

17:1 Dedupe Ratio and 100% Time Savings

"We have a self-imposed six-month retention period for most of our data. One thing that was different with tape was that in order to achieve that retention period, we would have to cycle tapes out of our library weekly and move them into different offsite storage – still on-campus but in a different building. With the ExaGrid system, we now have a replication unit – and since that is managed by the software automatically, it's a 100% time savings," said Thomas.

ExaGrid writes backups directly to a disk-cache Landing Zone, avoiding inline processing and ensuring the highest possible backup performance, which results in the shortest backup window. Adaptive Deduplication performs deduplication and replication in parallel with backups for a strong recovery point (RPO). As data is being deduplicated to the repository, it can also be replicated to a second ExaGrid site or the public cloud for disaster recovery (DR).

Hamilton College is currently getting data deduplication ratios as high as 17:1, which helps to maximize the amount of data the college can store on the system. The technology also helps to make transmission between sites more efficient. "We're using a fraction of the amount of disk capacity," said Thomas.

Flexibility with Popular Backup Apps Offers Modern Approach

Hamilton College continues to use Veritas Backup Exec for its physical servers, but the college has become 90+% virtualized, taking advantage of Veeam for maximum backup performance. Hamilton installed an ExaGrid system in its main datacenter and uses the system in conjunction with Backup Exec for its physical servers and Veeam Backup & Replication for virtual machines.

"We're very happy with Veeam and how well it works together with ExaGrid. We've learned that the combination of ExaGrid and Veeam delivers the fast restores, data deduplication, and backup reliability we were looking for. What makes a big difference for us is having a system that's architected for modern backups," said Thomas.

Unique Customer Support Model That Delivers

"We like having an assigned ExaGrid customer support engineer so that we don't have to go through the often laborious process of opening a case on the web or making a phone call and then waiting to be assigned to someone. Having a support engineer assigned to our account means they know our site well, they've gained experience with it, and they're very quickly able to get right to the root of the question and resolve it," said Thomas.

The ExaGrid system was designed to be easy to set up and operate. ExaGrid's industry-leading level 2 senior support engineers are assigned to individual customers, ensuring they always work with the same engineer. Customers never have to repeat themselves to various support staff, and issues get resolved quickly.

ExaGrid Architecture Provides Superior Scalability

ExaGrid's scalable architecture will enable Hamilton College to continue to expand its two-site solution. "Reliability is another key difference with ExaGrid. Backup is not something we need to spend a lot of time on anymore. ExaGrid just does its job in the background as it's supposed to. It really works flawlessly for the most part. Plus, it's scalable and will easily grow with us over time," said Thomas.

ExaGrid's appliance models can be mixed and matched into a single scale-out system allowing a full backup of up to 2.7PB with a combined ingest rate of 488TB/hr, in a single system. The appliances automatically join the scale-out system. Each appliance includes the appropriate amount of processor, memory, disk, and bandwidth for the data size. By adding compute with capacity, the backup window remains fixed in length as the data grows. Automatic load balancing across all repositories allows for full utilization of all appliances. Data is deduplicated into an offline repository, and additionally, data is globally deduplicated across all repositories.

ExaGrid and Veeam

Veeam's backup solutions and ExaGrid's Tiered Backup Storage combine for the industry's fastest backups, fastest restores, a scale-out storage system as data grows, and a strong ransomware recovery story – all at the lowest cost.

ExaGrid and Veritas Backup Exec

Veritas Backup Exec provides cost-effective, high-performance backup and recovery – including continuous data protection for Microsoft Exchange servers, Microsoft SQL servers, 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 Veritas Backup Exec can look to ExaGrid Tiered Backup Storage for nightly backups. ExaGrid sits behind existing backup applications, such as Veritas Backup Exec, providing faster and more reliable backups and restores. In a network running Veritas Backup Exec, using ExaGrid 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 ExaGrid for backup to disk.

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**.