EXAGRID®

Hutchinson Ports Sohar Uses ExaGrid-Veeam Solution for Comprehensive Data Protection Strategy

HUTCHISONPORTS

OMAN

Key Benefits:

- First-hand experience that Retention Time-Lock for Ransomware really works

- Seamless integration with Veeam

- System is easy to manage and proactively supported

- ExaGrid GUI is very useful and user-friendly

"Veeam and ExaGrid are both very user-friendly, and using them together is like using one solution."

Ahmed Al Breiki
Senior IT Infrastructure

Customer Overview

Hutchison Ports Sohar is an ultra-modern container-handling facility capable of accommodating the latest generation of mega-vessels. The terminal is located in the Port of Sohar, outside the Straits of Hormuz in the Gulf of Oman, approximately 200 kilometers from Muscat and 160 kilometers from Dubai. Ongoing investment in the Port of Sohar means it is emerging as an engine of economic growth, and a catalyst for further expansion in infrastructure, industry and commerce in the region.

ExaGrid Key Component of Comprehensive Data Protection Strategy

Hutchinson Ports Sohar backs it data up to an ExaGrid system using Veeam and then replicates data from ExaGrid to Microsoft Azure for disaster recovery, using the ExaGrid Cloud Tier. In addition, the company uses ExaGrid to copy backups to tape for offsite archival storage, a very comprehensive data protection strategy mandated by local government policy as well as Hutchinson Ports Sohar's parent company's policy.

Ahmed Al Breiki, Senior IT Infrastructure at Hutchinson Ports Sohar, had used ExaGrid when working at a previous company and was glad to see that it was installed when he started there, and likes working with the combined solution of ExaGrid and Veeam. "Veeam and ExaGrid are both very user-friendly, and using them together is like using one solution," he said.

He has also found that ExaGrid has made the tape archival a much quicker process. "I used to back up data directly from Veeam to tapes, but realized that replicating backups from ExaGrid's Landing Zone to the tape library is much faster, which has made a huge difference." ExaGrid's unique Landing Zone retains the most recent backup in its full undeduplicated form, enabling the fastest restores, offsite tape copies, and instant recoveries.

The ExaGrid Cloud Tier allows customers to replicate deduplicated backup data from a physical onsite ExaGrid appliance to the cloud tier in Amazon Web Services (AWS) or Microsoft Azure for an offsite disaster recovery (DR) copy. The ExaGrid Cloud Tier is a software version (VM) of ExaGrid that runs in AWS or Azure, and looks and acts exactly like a second-site ExaGrid appliance.

ExaGrid RTL Enables Recovery and Reduces RTO

Al Breiki feels secure using ExaGrid at Hutchinson Ports Sohar because he has been able to see

first-hand that *ExaGrid's Retention Time-Lock for Ransomware Recovery* (RTL) feature really works. "At my previous company where we had ExaGrid installed, we were hit with a LockBit ransomware attack, which encrypted all of our servers. It was such a shock and a terrible time, but thanks to ExaGrid's RTL feature, the data in our ExaGrid repository tier was not encrypted so I was able to restore that data easily, and speed up recovery to reduce the RTO," he said.

ExaGrid appliances have a network-facing, disk-cache Landing Zone where the most recent backups are stored in an undeduplicated format for fast backup and restore performance. Data is deduplicated into a non-network-facing Repository Tier, where the most recent backups, as well long-term retention backup data are stored as immutable objects, creating a tiered air gap. Any delete requests are delayed in the Repository Tier for a specified period of time so the data remains ready for recovery. This approach is called *Retention Time-Lock for Ransomware Recovery* (RTL). If encrypted data is deduplicated into the Repository Tier, it does not change, modify, or delete the previous data objects, ensuring that all data before the encryption event is ready to restore.

End-to-End Scale-Out of Backup with ExaGrid and Veeam

As the company's data has grown, more ExaGrid appliances have been added to the existing ExaGrid system, and Al Breiki has found that the combined solution of ExaGrid and Veeam is easily scalable. "The beauty of using Veeam and ExaGrid is the seamless integration. We created the scale-out repository in Veeam, installed the new ExaGrid appliances, and then simply pointed backups jobs to that repository. Presto! That was all we needed to do," he said.

ExaGrid supports Veeam's Scale-Out Backup Repository (SOBR). This allows backup administrators using Veeam to direct all jobs to a single repository made up of ExaGrid shares across multiple ExaGrid appliances in a single scale-out system, automating backup job management. ExaGrid's support of SOBR also automates the addition of appliances into an existing ExaGrid system as data grows by simply adding the new appliances to a Veeam repository group.

ExaGrid appliances contain not just disk but also processing power, memory, and bandwidth. When the system needs to expand, additional appliances are simply added to the existing system. The system scales linearly, maintaining a fixed-length backup window as data grows so customers only pay for what they need, when they need it. Data is deduplicated into a non-network-facing repository tier with automatic load balancing and global deduplication across all repositories.

'In Safe Hands' with ExaGrid Customer Support

Al Breiki find that the ExaGrid system is very easy to manage and feels very well supported by ExaGrid's Customer Support team. "The ExaGrid GUI is very useful and user-friendly. Using the dashboard is simple and all the information is easy to see. The ExaGrid system works well and you can almost forget about it, it's like it is working by itself," he said.

"Our ExaGrid customer support engineer responds quickly and provides excellent support. He is proactive and reaches out to schedule upgrading to the newest version whenever there is an update available. ExaGrid does a great job testing the updates before releasing the new versions, but even if unexpected errors do occur, my customer support engineer is available to work through the issues, so I know we are in safe hands," said Al Breiki. "He also monitors our ExaGrid system so that if there are abnormal activities, he will notify us, and if there are any hardware issues, he can resolve the issue right away. We had a problem with our motherboard, so he automatically shipped a new chassis from Dubai which we received within two days, so there was no data loss."

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 and Veeam

Al Breiki is pleased with deduplication that the ExaGrid-Veeam solution provides which has led to significant storage savings. Veeam uses changed block tracking to perform a level of data deduplication. ExaGrid allows Veeam deduplication and Veeam dedupe-friendly compression to stay on. ExaGrid will increase Veeam's deduplication by a factor of about 7:1 to a total combined deduplication ratio of 14:1, reducing the storage required and saving on storage costs up front and over time.

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.

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**.