

Ixilix Sees Major Improvement in Backups with ExaGrid

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Martin McCann
Vice President, IT of Operations
Ixilix

Customer Overview

Ixilix provides certified disaster recovery, hosting, virtualization, SAN storage, continuous data protection (CDP) over IP, D2D backups and other managed services specifically tailored to regulatory compliance standards, including SAS 70 Type II for SOX compliance, PCI DSS for payment card processing, HIPAA for Healthcare data, FISMA for Federal Agencies, and ISO 17799/27002. Ixilix’s state-of-the-art hosting facilities feature redundant power, redundant internet connectivity, and extensive physical and network security. Ixilix runs three data centers in Pennsylvania, near Philadelphia, Reading, and Pittsburgh, and is headquartered in Broomall, PA, a suburb of Philadelphia.

Managing Tape, Long Backup Windows Push Limits of IT Department

Ixilix’s customers rely on the company to host, store and protect their most critical data. Up until recently, the company had been backing up its data with a tape library, but the reality of managing 160 tapes a month and dealing with long backup windows was weighing down its IT operation.

“We were spending a considerable amount of time documenting, scanning, sorting and transporting tapes,” said Martin McCann, vice president of IT operations at Ixilix. “Also, our backups were constantly running 24 hours a day. We needed to find a comprehensive backup solution that would give us some breathing room and reduce the length of our backups.”

Cost-effective ExaGrid System Works with Existing Backup Application, Two-site System Enhances Disaster Recovery

The IT staff at Ixilix began looking at various disk-based backup solutions on the market, including products from ExaGrid, Data Domain, EMC and Network Appliance. Ultimately, Ixilix chose ExaGrid and deployed two 10TB systems, one in the company’s main data center in Broomall and the other in Reading, Pennsylvania. The ExaGrid systems are connected via VPN and work with Ixilix’s existing backup application, CA ARCserve Backup™. Data from each site

is replicated between locations in case it is needed for disaster recovery purposes.

“The ExaGrid system was about forty percent less than a comparable system from Data Domain. We also performed a cost analysis and compared the ExaGrid system to tape.

It turned out that when we factored in the cost of a new tape library, the ongoing cost of tape, and transportation costs to ship the tapes to a secure

facility, it was less expensive to purchase the ExaGrid system,” said McCann, “We spent a considerable amount of time dealing with tape and any of our administrative costs were either eliminated or reduced by moving our backups to ExaGrid.”

Data De-duplication for Fast Backups, Flexibility

“ExaGrid’s post-process approach to data de-duplication is very effective at reducing our data, and we found that the ExaGrid system provides faster backups than competitive products because the data is de-duplicated after it lands on the system,” said McCann. “Also, because the most recent copy is stored as a regular backup file, we can continue to back up to tape when it makes sense. Some of our customers need to store up to seven years of data on tape to meet specific requirements and we have the flexibility to meet their needs with ExaGrid.”

EXAGRID™

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 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 de-duplication 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 de-duplication technology moves only changes, requiring minimal WAN bandwidth.

Since installing the ExaGrid system, Ixilix has been able to reduce its backup window from 24 hours to 18 to 20 hours. Restores are also faster.

"In terms of restores, we are now able to be more responsive to our customers and can restore data in minutes instead of days," said McCann.

"It's far more convenient than recalling tapes from storage and sorting through them to find the right file. Disk is also more reliable than tape and we have a higher level of confidence in the integrity of our data with ExaGrid."

Scalability to Grow

Scalability was also an important factor in choosing the ExaGrid system. "It's extremely important that any solution we deploy be highly scalable so that we can meet the needs of both current and future clients," said Bob Boyer, senior vice president of sales and marketing at Ixilix.

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 60TB. Once virtualized, they appear as a single system to the backup server, and load balancing of all data across servers is automatic.

Becoming an ExaGrid Reseller Leads to New Business Opportunities

After first-hand experience as a satisfied customer, Ixilix has become an ExaGrid reseller and is offering the system to its clients seeking an onsite, disk-based backup system. The ExaGrid system supports two-site or multi-site cross protection for up to nine datacenter locations. With its simplified multi-site management, up to nine sites can be managed via a single web-based user interface.

"Several of our clients are installing ExaGrid systems in their own data centers and are using one of our facilities as a secondary site," said Boyer.

"Certain customers were looking to us to remotely manage their backups and now we have a solution to meet their needs. ExaGrid's multi-site management enables us to perform backups for entire organizations remotely while replicating data back to our site for disaster recovery. We see lots of opportunity in managing remote backups for a wide range of clients."

"The ExaGrid system takes a lot of pain out of our backups," said McCann. "Our backup times are far better than they were with tape and we no longer have to deal with managing and administering nearly 160 tapes per month," said McCann. "For us, it's wonderful to have the data on hand and ready in case a customer needs to restore information. Our clients are happier because we can offer them faster access to their data and we can offer them more flexible options to enhance their backup strategies."

ExaGrid and CA ARCserve Backup

CA ARCserve Backup delivers reliable, enterprise-class data protection across multiple hardware and software platforms. Its proven technology — unified by a single, easy-to-use interface — enables multi-tiered protection driven by business goals and policies. Organizations using ARCserve Backup can look to ExaGrid as an alternative to tape for nightly backups. ExaGrid sits behind existing backup applications, such as ARCserve Backup, providing faster and more reliable backups and restores. In a network running ARCserve Backup, 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 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 sites and secondary sites to supplement or eliminate offsite tapes with live data repositories for disaster recovery.

For more information about ExaGrid, please visit us at www.exagrid.com or call us at 1-800-868-6985.