

Lifetime Assistance Installs ExaGrid for Fastest Possible Backups

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Abbey Simmons
Coordinator of IT
Lifetime Assistance

Customer Overview

Licking Memorial Health Systems has served the needs of the Licking County, Ohio area for more than 100 years. The 227-bed hospital offers a full spectrum of quality patient care services, from emergency medicine to home health care. Comprehensive services are available in areas such as cancer, heart, maternity and mental health. It has been ranked by Thomson Reuters, the nation's leading source of healthcare business intelligence, as a 100 Top Hospital in the medium-hospital-size category for 10 years.

Long Backup Times and Failed Backups using Straight Disk

Lifetime Assistance had been backing up its six remote locations over T1 lines to its main data center using straight disk and then copying the data off to tape. As the volume of Lifetime's data continued to increase, their backup window grew to be so large that as one backup was running, it would impede the subsequent backup from starting.

"Our disk-based system simply couldn't accommodate the amount of data and the rate at which we were sending jobs," said Abbey Simmons, coordinator of information technology at Lifetime Assistance, "and when backups failed, we'd have tough choices to make between re-running failed jobs or missing a backup. The remote site that was the most problematic had a full backup that kicked off on Friday night and typically didn't finish until sometime during the day on Wednesday."

In addition to their lengthy backup window, managing tapes continued to be an increasingly cumbersome chore, so Lifetime began to look for a better alternative and found ExaGrid.

ExaGrid Integrates Easily into Existing Environment

Simmons said that the ExaGrid was the only solution that Lifetime considered due to the fact that no other system offered

everything that the ExaGrid does. "We didn't find anything that did all the things that we needed other than the ExaGrid," said Simmons.

"It was very important to us that the ExaGrid fits into our existing environment and integrates seamlessly with Symantec Backup Exec. We've had other backup solutions in the past, and we're comfortable with Backup Exec. It works well, and we really wanted to keep it. ExaGrid allowed us to do that," she said.

Backup Times Reduced, Stress-Free Management

Simmons said that installing the ExaGrid system has greatly reduced backup windows. When Lifetime was backing up to straight disk, their most troublesome backup that was started on Friday night typically ran until Wednesday – and not always error free or completely. Simmons reports that that same backup now finishes by the time she arrives at work on Monday morning.

"Our backups are much easier to manage now that we're backing up to the ExaGrid," said Simmons. "Since we've had the ExaGrid installed, there hasn't been a job that's failed. Any time you can put a device in place that comes with really low management overhead and proactive customer support, it's fantastic, and that's what you get with the ExaGrid system. The system has given me peace of mind and confidence in my backups that I didn't have before," she said.



Post-Process Data Dedupe Maximizes Speed of Backup Jobs

One of the compelling features of the ExaGrid to Lifetime Assistance was the way the ExaGrid system handles data deduplication. "It was important for us that the deduplication occur post process after the backups have landed versus deduplicating while the backups are being written," said Simmons. "That approach gets our backups completed as quickly as possible, and the ExaGrid is the only system that offers that."

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 zone-level data deduplication technology moves only changes, requiring minimal WAN bandwidth.

Quick and Simple Installation, Reliable Customer Support

According to Simmons, "The installation was seamless. Our support engineer contacted me to review the requirements and how to set everything up. Then he set up a remote session to install the system with me. It was really quite simple. I've been very pleased with the customer support I've received since the installation as well. Anytime I have a question or need information, our engineer sets up a remote session and helps me out. He's very accessible," said Simmons.

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.

Simple Scalability with GRID Architecture

Lifetime currently has a total of seven sites that they back up to the ExaGrid. As the company's data grows or as they add sites, the ExaGrid system can easily scale to accommodate 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 130TB

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.

"Because our data is growing, we will probably add another ExaGrid in the near future. I like that it's so easy to do. When we were backing up to straight disk, adding disk was a lot of work. A few years ago before ExaGrid when we needed to add capacity, we had to move everything to tape and reformat the box so that we could add another hard drive to it. It's really nice to be able to just add another ExaGrid," said Simmons.

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.

Organizations using Symantec Backup Exec can look to ExaGrid as an alternative to tape for nightly backups. ExaGrid sits behind existing backup applications, such as Symantec Backup Exec, providing faster and more reliable backups and restores. In a network running Symantec Backup Exec, 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 zone-level data deduplication, delivering a disk-based solution that is more cost effective than standard SATA drives. ExaGrid's zone-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 us at www.exagrid.com or call us at 1-800-868-6985.