

University Avoids Forklift Upgrade by Installing Scalable ExaGrid System

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Delroy Honeyghan
Network Administrator

Key Benefits:

- ExaGrid system provides more capacity and better performance than former EMC Data Domain system
- Backup window reduced from 24 hours to just 1-1/2 hours
- System replicates to the university's second site for DR protection
- No future forklift upgrades; scaling the system with data growth is now as easy as adding another ExaGrid appliance to the GRID

Customer Overview

Lynn University is a private, non-profit university located in Boca Raton, Florida. Founded in 1962, Lynn University hosts students from nearly all of the 50 U.S. states and approximately 80 nations, with 24 percent of its students from countries outside the U.S. The university is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award associate's, baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral degrees.

Lack of Capacity, Need for Better Performance Led to Two-site ExaGrid System

Lynn University decided to look for a new backup solution when its EMC Data Domain system ran out of capacity.

"We needed more capacity and better performance from our EMC Data Domain system and were faced with a forklift upgrade because it wasn't scalable," said Delroy Honeyghan, network administrator at Lynn University. "We decided to look around for competitive solutions and learned about the ExaGrid system. We were immediately impressed with its scalability and its ability to replicate data to another unit offsite for disaster recovery. We also liked the fact that the system backs up data to a landing zone before deduplicating it for faster backup times."

The university purchased a two-site ExaGrid system to work along with its existing backup applications, Dell vRanger and Symantec Backup Exec. Data is backed up each night to an EX13000 system in the university's main datacenter in Boca Raton and then replicated automatically to an EX7000 system in its disaster recovery site in Atlanta.

"We had been backing up the EMC Data Domain system to tape and then sending the tapes offsite. Now, we eliminate that entire step with the two-site ExaGrid

system," Honeyghan said. "Our data is safer and more secure, and it will be easier to recover in the event of a disaster, but the best part is that we've been able to reduce our reliance on tape."

GRID Architecture Delivers Scalability to Accommodate Future Growth

Honeyghan said that ExaGrid's GRID architecture will ensure that the university can easily and cost effectively scale the system as its backup needs increase. "Our old EMC Data Domain system wasn't scalable and we would have had to purchase a whole new head to gain capacity. With the ExaGrid, we can just add appliances to our GRID to increase capacity and maintain performance," he said.

ExaGrid uses a GRID-based configuration, so when the system needs to expand, additional appliance nodes are attached to the GRID, bringing with them not only additional disk but also processing power, memory, and bandwidth. This type of configuration allows the system to maintain all the aspects of performance as the amount of data grows. In addition, as new ExaGrid appliance nodes are added to the GRID, the ExaGrid automatically load balances available capacity, maintaining a virtual pool of storage that is shared across the GRID.

EXAGRID™

Backup Times Reduced from 24 hours to 90 Minutes

Honeyghan said that Lynn University installed the ExaGrid systems in conjunction with a network upgrade, and he's still amazed at the difference in speed and overall performance of the university's backups.

"We upgraded our network to 10Gb, which contributed to the speed, but still, the ExaGrid system is so much faster than the EMC Data Domain unit was. Our backups had previously been taking nearly 24 hours, but now they're running for only about 90 minutes. We still can't get over how dramatic the improvement is," he said. "ExaGrid's post-process deduplication methodology helps to ensure that we're getting the fastest backups possible while reducing the amount of data stored on the system."

ExaGrid combines standard compression along with zone-level data deduplication, which stores changes from backup to backup instead of storing full file copies. 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 the changes from backup to backup, requiring minimal WAN bandwidth.

Outstanding Customer Support

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 assigned to individual accounts. The system is fully supported and was designed and manufactured for maximum uptime with redundant, hot-swappable components.

Honeyghan said the ExaGrid system was easy to install and it's easy to maintain.

"I racked the ExaGrid system and called in to our ExaGrid support engineer to assist with the final configuration. She's been great to work with and is very responsive. I recently

worked with her on decreasing the landing space on the ExaGrid system in our colocation center, and she responded right away and was extremely knowledgeable and helpful. We've been very happy with the ExaGrid system. We've been able to cut our reliance on tape and our backup times, and we're confident that when it's time to upgrade the system, its GRID architecture will make it easy to do. It's been working wonderfully and we've had no issues – it just works."

ExaGrid and Dell vRanger

Dell vRanger offers full image-level and differential backups of virtual machines to enable faster, more efficient storage and recovery of virtual machines. ExaGrid's disk-based backup systems serve as the backup target for these virtual machine images, using high-performance, post-process data deduplication to dramatically reduce the disk storage capacity required for backups versus standard disk storage.

ExaGrid and Symantec Backup Exec

Symantec Backup Exec is the gold standard in Windows data recovery, providing 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. It also supports single-drive libraries, encryption, and disaster recovery. High-performance agents and options provide fast, flexible, granular protection and recovery, 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.

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