

Medical Group Replicates Data for Disaster Recovery Using ExaGrid

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

Manatee County Rural Health Services

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Charlene Harsch
Sr. Systems Administrator
Manatee County
Rural Health Services

Key Benefits:

- Speed and reliability of backups 'greatly improved'
- Cross-replication provides for DR protection
- Time spent managing backups significantly reduced
- Ability to easily scale provides for painless system expansion as data grows

Customer Overview

Manatee County Rural Health Services (MCRHS) is a private, not-for-profit medical group practicing in 20 locations in Manatee and adjacent Florida counties. Based in Parrish, Florida, MCRHS is one of the few independent medical groups in the region that has earned and maintained the prestigious accreditation of the Joint Commission, the national accrediting organization for healthcare providers.

Unreliable and Lengthy Backups Compel Evaluation of Alternatives

The IT staff at Manatee County Rural Health Services (MCRHS) was spending too much of its valuable time on managing and troubleshooting backups. They reached a point where they began to investigate alternatives that would better serve their needs and provide the efficiency they needed.

"I used to begin my day by checking to see how many of our backup jobs had failed overnight, and often would spend six hours or more per week trying to get them to run correctly," said Charlene Harsch, senior systems administrator at Manatee County Rural Health Services. "Also, our backups were taking way too long. We had some jobs that would run 90-plus hours and then fail. It was extremely frustrating and time consuming."

Manatee had been backing up its data to a SAN in its main datacenter in Parrish and then replicating it to another SAN in its disaster recovery site located 50 miles away. However, when the second SAN ran out of disk space and went into preservation mode, MCRHS decided the time was right to look for a new backup approach.

"We looked at several different solutions, including software-based products like Veeam and Dell Appassure, and hardware-based systems from ExaGrid and Quantum. In the end, we decided that a purpose-built appliance was the right solution for our environment and chose the ExaGrid," said

Harsch. "The ExaGrid system had the best price/performance by far. From a technical perspective, we liked ExaGrid's approach to data deduplication and believed that its post-process method would deliver the fastest possible backups. Also, we liked that we could install systems in both our main datacenter and our disaster recovery site and quickly replicate data between the two units."

MCRHS purchased a two-site ExaGrid system and installed one unit in its main data center in Parrish and the second in its Arcadia, Florida disaster recovery site. The ExaGrid systems work along with Symantec Backup Exec to back up and protect a wide range of business and patient data.

Faster, More Efficient Backups; 14:1 Dedupe Ratio Helps to Maximize Disk Space

"I love the ExaGrid system! I used to walk into the office each morning and face a long list of failed backup jobs along with hours and hours of troubleshooting. Now, our backup jobs are completed without fail, each and every night," Harsch said. "The ExaGrid system backs the data up to the unit first and then dedupes it, so backup jobs run as quickly as possible. We're currently receiving 14:1 data deduplication, which helps to maximize disk space."

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

EXAGRID™

of 10:1 to 50:1 or more, delivering unparalleled cost savings and performance. ExaGrid delivers extremely fast backup and 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.

Harsch said that since installing the ExaGrid system, up to 20 backup jobs are staggered throughout the night and all are completed by 7:00 a.m. each morning.

"Our backup jobs run far more efficiently with the ExaGrid. We had one job in particular that used to take in excess of 90 hours to complete. Now, that same job is done in eight hours," she said.

Fast Setup, Superior Customer Support

Harsch worked with her ExaGrid customer support engineer to set up the system, and found the process to be fast and efficient.

"Our ExaGrid support engineer set up a WebEx session and helped me with the installation process, and we had the system up and running in no time. I have a good relationship with our support engineer and find him easy to reach and accessible any time I have a question or concern," she said. "ExaGrid's support has been nothing short of stellar."

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.

"The ExaGrid system's user interface is easy to use and intuitive. Because the ExaGrid is so solid, I barely have to touch it, but when I do, I find it easy to navigate and manage," she said

GRID Architecture Ensures Scalability

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.

"We're constantly grappling with data growth, and we're confident that ExaGrid's GRID architecture will give us the

ability to easily scale the system if and when we need additional capacity or performance," she said. Harsch said that she's confident that purchasing the ExaGrid system was the right decision for MCRHS.

"As a non-profit, we're always trying to maximize our budget dollars and we're always second-guessing our technology decisions and purchases. Without reservation, I can say that the decision to purchase the ExaGrid system was the right one for our environment. It has greatly improved the speed and reliability of our backups and reduced the amount of time we spend administering the process," she said.

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.