

Melmark Installs ExaGrid System for 'Flawless' Backups, Virtualizes with Veeam

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

Melmark  New England

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Greg Dion
IT Manager
Melmark New England

Key Benefits:

- Easy scalability in the face of impending data increase 'Phenomenal' level of customer support
- Seamless integration with Veeam
- Data deduplication as high as 83:1
- Retention increased to 8-12 weeks

Customer Overview

Melmark New England serves the needs of children and young adults with autism spectrum disorders (ASD), acquired brain injury, neurodevelopmental disorders, dual diagnosis and severe challenging behaviors in the Greater Boston area. The year-round education programs at Melmark's Andover, Massachusetts site, as well as its residential programs and outreach consultation services, have benefited great numbers of students, often achieving remarkable results. The organization's eminently qualified and professional staff provides a level of service and dedication to students that have earned Melmark New England a longstanding reputation for education and clinical service excellence.

Melmark Chooses ExaGrid to Replace Problematic "All-in-One" Backup Device

Melmark New England was backing up to disk and when the problems with the backup unit persisted, Melmark sought out alternate solutions that were more suited to their needs and expectations.

"We originally installed an 'all-in-one' disk-based backup device to replace tape but suffered through 15 months of constant problems with the unit. It was an absolute nightmare, and we finally decided to look for a new solution," said Greg Dion, IT manager for Melmark. "After doing a lot of due diligence on several different backup solutions, we decided to purchase the ExaGrid system." ExaGrid's post-process data deduplication technology, easy management, scalability, and customer support model all played into the decision, Dion said.

"The ExaGrid system offered all the features we were looking for, along with a solid hardware platform," he said. "From the outset, we had a great deal of confidence in the system. It's worked flawlessly since the beginning."

Melmark installed a two-site ExaGrid system to provide both primary backup and disaster recovery. One unit was installed in its datacenter in Andover, Massachusetts and a second in its Berwyn, Pennsylvania

location. Data is replicated between the two systems in real time over a 100MBps symmetrical fiber circuit.

After selecting the ExaGrid system, Melmark set out to buy a new backup application and purchased Veeam after looking at several other software solutions.

"One of the nice things about the ExaGrid system is that it supports all the popular backup applications, so we had the freedom to choose the right product for our environment. We finally chose Veeam and have been very happy with the high level of integration between the two products," Dion said. "We're currently backing up using a combination of Veeam and SQL dumps, and our backups run efficiently."

Post-Process Deduplication Speeds Backups and Replication Between Sites

ExaGrid's post-process data deduplication technology helps to maximize the amount of data stored on the system while ensuring that backups run as quickly as possible "ExaGrid's data deduplication technology is one of the best features of the system. We're currently seeing dedupe ratios as high as 83:1, so we're able to retain 8-12 weeks of data based on our retention policies," Dion said. "Because the data is deduplicated after it hits the landing zone, the backup jobs run as quickly as possible."



ExaGrid combines standard compression along with zone-level 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 the changes from backup to backup, requiring minimal WAN bandwidth.

"Since we only send changed data over the network, the transmission speed between sites is fast and efficient. In fact, it's so fast that we don't even notice that the systems are synchronizing anymore," he said.

Easy Installation, Proactive Customer Support

Dion said that he installed the ExaGrid system into Melmark's datacenter himself, then powered it on, and called the ExaGrid's customer support engineer assigned to the organization's account to finish the configuration.

"The installation process really couldn't have been easier, and it was nice to have our support engineer remote into the system and complete the configuration for us. That alone gave us an extra measure of confidence in the system," he said. "Since the very beginning, our support engineer has been extremely attentive, and the level of support we receive is phenomenal. He will proactively call us to check in, and he's spent the time to tailor and configure the system to meet the specific needs of our environment."

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.

Smooth Scalability to Handle Increased Backup Requirements

Dion said that Melmark is planning on purchasing another ExaGrid system to handle increased backup requirements.

"We have some initiatives coming up that will add new databases and will cause an increase in the amount of data we need to back up. Thankfully, the ExaGrid can be easily scaled to accommodate more data by just adding units," he said.

ExaGrid uses a GRID-based configuration, where each appliance contains processing power, memory, bandwidth,

and disk. When the system needs to expand, additional appliance nodes are attached to the GRID, bringing with them additional processing power, memory, bandwidth, and disk. This type of configuration allows the system to maintain all the aspects of performance as the amount of data grows, and you are only paying for the amount of processing power, memory and bandwidth as you need it. 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.

"Frankly, we were a little battle-worn from our last experience when we decided to install the ExaGrid system. However, the ExaGrid system has lived up to our expectations and more. Not only are our backups completed successfully, but we have the comfort of knowing that our data is replicated automatically offsite and is easily accessible in case of a disaster," Dion said. "We highly recommend the ExaGrid system."

ExaGrid and Veeam

The combination of ExaGrid's and Veeam's industry-leading virtual server data protection solutions allows customers to utilize Veeam Backup & Replication in VMware, vSphere, and Microsoft Hyper-V virtual environments on ExaGrid's disk-based backup system. This combination provides fast backups and efficient data storage as well as replication to an offsite location for disaster recovery. The ExaGrid system fully leverages Veeam Backup & Replication's built-in backup to disk capabilities and ExaGrid's zone-level data deduplication for additional data reduction (and cost reduction) over standard disk solutions. Customers can use Veeam Backup & Replication's built-in source-side deduplication in concert with ExaGrid's disk-based backup system with zone-level deduplication to further shrink backups.

Intelligent Data Protection

ExaGrid's turnkey disk-based backup system combines high quality disk drives with zone-level data deduplication, delivering a disk-based solution that is far more cost effective than simply backing up to straight disk. 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 backing up to straight disk. 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.