

Morrill & Janes Bank Improves Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Planning with ExaGrid

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



“The ExaGrid system was competitively priced, and it was a standout in terms of its scalability and its data deduplication technology. We were also impressed with ExaGrid’s customer support team. From the outset, they were extremely responsive and knowledgeable.”

Chris Saylor
Chief Technology Officer
Morrill & Janes Bank

Customer Overview

Morrill & Janes Bank was founded in 1871 and was the first state chartered bank in Kansas. The bank specializes in retail and personal lending and has locations in Merriam, Hiawatha, Sabetha, Troy, Onaga, and Lee’s Summit, Missouri.

Review of Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plans Revealed Gap

After taking a hard look at its business continuity and disaster recovery plans, the IT staff at Morrill & Janes Bank decided to reevaluate its backup processes to improve recovery time in the event of a disaster.

The bank had been backing up data from its two datacenters to tape and then sending the tapes offsite for safekeeping, but in the event of a disaster, the data would be at least a day old. The daily grind of managing and administering tape was wearing thin, so the staff decided to evaluate disk-based systems to reduce the bank’s reliance on tape.

“Our disaster recovery plan needed improvement to achieve our RPO,” said Chris Saylor, chief technology officer at Morrill & Janes Bank. “We realized that in the event of a disaster, we would have to call back tapes from storage and then restore from the tapes. We had already invested in DR technology, and needed an efficient way to replicate our data. We needed a system that would allow us to replicate data between our two data centers over a wide area network to provide us with the fastest recovery time.”

Two-site System Replicates Data between Data Centers

After looking at several different disk-based solutions, Morrill & Janes chose a two-site disk-based backup system with data deduplication from ExaGrid. The ExaGrid systems are located 120 miles apart in the

bank’s Merriam and Onaga data centers. The systems work alongside the bank’s existing backup application, Symantec Backup Exec application and Vizioncore vRanger Pro to back up both physical and virtual servers.

“We chose the ExaGrid system after looking at solutions from Data Domain, Spectra Logic, and Quantum. The ExaGrid system was competitively priced and from a technology standpoint, we liked the system’s scalability and its data deduplication approach,” said Saylor. “We were also impressed with ExaGrid’s customer support team. From the outset, they were extremely responsive and knowledgeable.”

Data Deduplication Approach Ensures Fast, Efficient Backups

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



"We compared ExaGrid's post-process data deduplication approach to other systems that used inline data deduplication," said Saylor. "Because the ExaGrid dedupes the data after it lands on the system, the backup times are shorter. Also, because only the changes are moved across the WAN, it will be far more efficient to transmit the data between our two sites."

Easy Setup and Administration, Superior Customer Support

The ExaGrid system works with popular backup applications and was designed to be easy to install and maintain. "The ExaGrid system works seamlessly with Backup Exec and with vRanger Pro. I set the system up myself, and it was a straightforward, easy process. ExaGrid's customer support was a big help and there were fantastic white papers to use as resources as well," said Saylor.

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.

"I am simply ecstatic about ExaGrid's customer support. We have a dedicated support engineer to work with, and he is extremely responsive and knowledgeable about the ins and outs of the ExaGrid system, and he's become very familiar with our environment. It's a pleasure to deal with a support organization like ExaGrid's," said Saylor.

Scalability to Add Capacity as Backup Requirements Grow

"Scalability was important to us because we needed to ensure that the system could grow to handle future demands," said Saylor. "Some of the other systems on the market have a head unit with disks on the back end that are difficult to scale. ExaGrid's GRID architecture will enable us to easily grow the system as the amount of data we need to back up grows."

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 100TB 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.

About ExaGrid Systems, Inc.

Customers worldwide depend on ExaGrid Systems to solve their backup problems—effectively and permanently. ExaGrid's disk-based, scale-out GRID architecture adjusts to increasing backup demands due to constantly growing data volumes. It is the only solution that combines compute with capacity as well as a unique landing zone to permanently shorten backup windows and eliminate expensive forklift upgrades. Learn more at www.exagrid.com.

"We've been very pleased with the ExaGrid system. We've been able to improve our backup times and have significantly reduced the amount of tape we use. It's so nice to not have to deal with tape, and we've cut our backup administration time down tremendously," said Saylor. "Also, we've improved our disaster recovery plan with the ExaGrid system. In the event of a disaster, we'll have access to our last backup immediately instead of fooling around with tape. It's priceless."

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.

ExaGrid and Vizioncore vRanger Pro

vRanger Pro is the recognized industry-standard backup and restore solution for virtualized environments. Administrators can schedule regular image-level backups of virtual or physical machines – while the machine is still running. Images can be stored either locally in the SAN or sent as compressed files over a WAN to remote locations to support disaster recovery strategies.

Intelligent Data Protection

ExaGrid's turnkey disk-based backup system combines high quality SATA drives with byte-level data deduplication, delivering a disk-based solution that is more cost effective than standard SATA drives. ExaGrid's byte-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.