

NPS Pharmaceuticals Streamlines Backups and Restores with ExaGrid

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Jason Ostrowski
Manager of I.T.
NPS Pharmaceuticals

Customer Overview

NPS Pharmaceuticals develops specialty therapeutics for gastrointestinal and endocrine disorders. NPS complements its proprietary programs with a royalty-based portfolio of products and product candidates that includes strategic partnerships with Amgen, GlaxoSmithKline, Kyowa Kirin, Nycomed and Ortho-McNeil. NPS is located in Bedminster, New Jersey.

Long Backups and Restores, SOX Compliance Difficult with Tape

As the manager of information technology at NPS Pharmaceuticals, Jason Ostrowski is all too familiar with the day-to-day difficulties of backing up to tape. Lengthy backups and difficulty restoring data from tape had worn thin and Ostrowski began looking for a more automated solution that could reduce the company’s reliance on tape, improve disaster recovery and make adhering to Sarbanes-Oxley (SOX) regulations easier.

“Dealing with tape was just a nightmare from many perspectives. Our nightly backups were taking far too long and tape was unreliable. It was also extremely expensive to continuously purchase tapes and to store and transport them,” said Ostrowski. “In addition, meeting SOX requirements was difficult and time consuming with tape and we needed a better disaster recovery scenario.”

At first, Ostrowski considered backing up the firm’s data to network-attached storage but soon realized that retention would quickly become an issue without data compression technology.

“Initially, we thought that backing up to our NAS would have been cost effective because we already owned the equipment, but we realized that without any compression, we would have ended up with only a few days of retention before we would have backed up the system to tape,” said Ostrowski.

Two-site ExaGrid System Provides Primary Backup for Disaster Recovery, Data Deduplication Maximizes Disk Space

After looking at various software and hardware-based backup systems, NPS chose a two-site ExaGrid disk-based backup system to provide both primary backup and data replication for disaster recovery. The firm installed one unit at its datacenter in Bedminster and second system in a co-location facility for data replication.

The ExaGrid systems work with NPS’s existing backup application, CA ARCserve Backup.

“ExaGrid fit nicely into our existing environment and we were able to keep our investment in ARCserve, so we didn’t have to learn any new applications or purchase additional equipment,” said Ostrowski. “Footprint and power draw were also considerations for us because we were going to install one of our ExaGrid’s in a co-location facility. We were able to purchase a smaller system than we otherwise would have because ExaGrid’s data deduplication enables us to maximize the amount of data we can keep on system and it makes the most of our rack space.”

NPS is currently achieving a 12:1 data deduplication rate using ExaGrid’s byte-level data deduplication technology. 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.

ExaGrid's post-process data deduplication reduces data after it lands on the system to achieve the fastest possible backup performance. Since installing the ExaGrid system, NPS has been able to reduce its backup times considerably. Weekly full backups to tape took nearly 38 hours but have been reduced to 13 hours with ExaGrid, and daily incremental backups have been reduced by at least 50 percent.

ExaGrid's data deduplication technology helps NPS maximize the amount of data the company can retain. NPS is able to keep three months of data on the ExaGrid system, which makes SOX audits far easier than they had been with tape.

"We're now able to keep plenty of data on our ExaGrid system, which helps us with our restores and enables us to be better prepared in case we're audited," said Ostrowski. "Restoring data from the ExaGrid is nearly instantaneous. We did a side-by-side comparison and restored a large financial directory from tape and from the ExaGrid and there was simply no comparison. The ExaGrid was extremely fast."

The two-site ExaGrid system has enhanced NPS's disaster recovery scenario, and Ostrowski feels more secure about the company's ability to quickly recover its data in the event of a disaster.

"With tape, our disaster recovery plan was basically to grab the tapes, find a co-location facility to set up in, and then attempt to rebuild our information from the tape media. But, restoring data from tape is always a risky process and it would have taken a considerable amount of time to restore all of our data," said Ostrowski. "Now, with the two-site ExaGrid system, we only have to remote into our disaster recovery center and access the backups from the night before. It's a huge leap forward for us in terms of disaster recovery."

Implementing System Significantly Reduces Tape Costs and Off-site Storage Fees

According to Ostrowski, installing the ExaGrid system has

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.

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"The return on investment for the ExaGrid system is tremendous," said Ostrowski. "It's easy to justify the cost of the ExaGrid system with hard numbers like tape, storage and transportation costs, but it really makes even more sense when you figure in the amount of time we spend managing and troubleshooting backups and restores and the cost of downtime for the user waiting for a file."

ExaGrid and CA ARCserve Backup

CA ARCserve Backup delivers reliable, enterprise-class data protection across multiple hardware and software platforms. Its proven technology — unified by a single, easy-to-use interface — enables multi-tiered protection driven by business goals and policies. Organizations using ARCserve Backup can look to ExaGrid as an alternative to tape for nightly backups. ExaGrid sits behind existing backup applications, such as ARCserve Backup, providing faster and more reliable backups and restores. In a network running ARCserve Backup, 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 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.