

NBME Cuts Backup Window by 50% and DR Testing from Weeks to Days with ExaGrid

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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David Graziani
Senior UNIX Systems Analyst

Customer Overview

Founded in 1915, the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) is an independent, not-for-profit organization that serves the public through its high-quality assessments of healthcare professionals. Medical specialty boards, other healthcare professions, and academic institutions call on the NBME to develop customized assessments, while online assessments help students and professionals identify their own strengths and weaknesses. Organizations can draw on the NBME's expertise as consultants for their own assessment programs, test administration, and scoring.

ExaGrid Replaces Painful Tape Process for Disaster Recovery

NBME had been having issues with disaster recovery testing while using Veritas NetBackup and tape. "It was a painstaking process to gather all the needed information through NetBackup to do a tape restore, and to make sure the tapes were available and not damaged. Then there was the process of actually restoring the data, which required manual tape loading after the test. When we realized there was a way to do this without manually handling tape, it made a big impact. It was a great change for us," said David Graziani, senior UNIX systems analyst at NBME. "We had been unloading tapes in the morning and again in the afternoon, then shipping them off to our DR site for offsite storage. Since we installed ExaGrid, the data is sent automatically – it's great!"

ExaGrid and Dell EMC Data Domain were among several solutions that NBME considered for replacing its tape-based disaster recovery. ExaGrid was chosen for its deduplication and replication, which were major deciding factors. Graziani noted, "We wanted to be able to replicate quickly and without worry to our offsite storage and DR site." NBME purchased six ExaGrid appliances to use onsite and four for disaster recovery offsite. Graziani added, "ExaGrid offers reliability - reliable DR testing, reliable backups and restores, reliable customer support, all on a consistent basis."

ExaGrid Installation is 'A Breeze'

"The installation was great," said Graziani. "We had our ExaGrid system up and running, and



fully configured in less than 48 hours. On top of that, we were able to start backing up all of the data we normally needed to in that timeframe. It was a breeze to install, and the support was super."

The ExaGrid system is easy to install and use, and works seamlessly with all of the most frequently used backup applications, so an organization can seamlessly retain their investment in existing applications and processes.

ExaGrid's customer support and maintenance services are designed to ensure that ExaGrid meets the customer's data protection needs through remote support, automated emails with updates on health reporting, and an easy-to-use GUI. "The reporting is great, because it puts everything in a nice chart for management to review and gives an overall quick look at how well the system is performing," Graziani said.

A Dramatic Reduction of Backup Window and DR Testing Time

Graziani was impressed with the results of

EXAGRID

Key Benefits:

- Backup window reduced from 14 hours to under 7
- DR recoveries are twice as fast
- ExaGrid allows for quick, worry-free replication to offsite storage
- 'Outstanding' customer support is a one-stop solution for the entire environment

upgrading to ExaGrid from tape. "Our backup window has shrunk drastically. We're doing our DR recoveries twice as fast, if not faster. There's no more gathering of tapes and getting them ready to process. It's all done online without any intervention from any operators whatsoever, except for the person doing the restore. Our backup window was about 14 hours and now it's down to 6 or 7."

NBME conducts DR testing twice per year. "We used to manually ship tapes, get the exact tapes lined up, packaged up, and shipped. If we were missing tapes, that would delay testing by a day or longer. Using ExaGrid has cut our DR testing time down from weeks to days," Graziani noted.

A One-Stop Support Solution

Graziani was pleased to find that ExaGrid support staff are specialists in specific backup applications and are assigned based on having expertise with a customer's backup application(s). He noted, "Anytime we send over an e-mail, we get a response within minutes. ExaGrid customer support is outstanding; they work out problems from start to finish. They don't ask you to call another company if you have questions about a backup application or software. It's all done under the umbrella of ExaGrid 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.

Graziani added, "ExaGrid support has been just unbelievable in helping and resolving any issues very quickly. Where before it might have been days if not a week before we got issues resolved, with ExaGrid I can count on timely resolution to any problems that pop up."

About ExaGrid

ExaGrid provides backup storage with a unique landing zone and scale-out architecture. The landing zone provides for the fastest backups, restores and instant VM recoveries. The scale-out architecture includes full appliances in a scalable GRID and provides for a fixed-length backup window as data grows, eliminating expensive forklift upgrades. Learn more at www.exagrid.com.

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ExaGrid and NetBackup

Veritas NetBackup delivers high performance data protection that scales to protect the largest UNIX, Windows, Linux, OS X and NetWare environments. With complete protection from remote office to data center to vault, NetBackup offers a single console for all backup and recovery operations. Organizations using Veritas NetBackup can look to ExaGrid as an alternative to tape for nightly backups. ExaGrid sits behind existing backup applications such as NetBackup, providing faster and more reliable backups and restores. In a network running NetBackup, 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 enterprise SATA/SAS 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 patented zone-level deduplication reduces the disk space needed by a range of 10:1 to 50:1 by storing only the unique bytes across backups instead of redundant data. Adaptive deduplication performs deduplication and replication in parallel with backups while providing full system resources to the backups for the fastest backups and, therefore, the shortest backup window. As data grows, only ExaGrid avoids expanding backup windows by adding full appliances in a GRID. ExaGrid's unique landing zone keeps a full copy of the most recent backup on disk, delivering the fastest restores, VM boots in seconds to minutes, "Instant DR," and fast tape copy. Over time, ExaGrid saves up to 50% in total system costs compared to competitive solutions by avoiding costly "forklift" upgrades.