

NextiraOne Federal Reduces Backup Times, Improves Restores with ExaGrid

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Becky Gravett
IT Manager
NextiraOne Federal,
dba Black Box
Network Services

Customer Overview

Black Box Corporation (NASDAQ: BBOX) is a trusted provider of comprehensive communications and infrastructure solutions. As a value-added reseller of platforms and applications from the industry's top manufacturers, and a provider of its own line of technology products and services, the company designs, builds, and maintains today's complex voice and data networks.

Long Backups, Problematic Tape Led to ExaGrid for Disk-based Backup

NextiraOne's IT department decided to look for a new backup approach in an effort to improve disaster recovery and alleviate long backup times and the daily challenges of dealing with tape.

"Our nightly incremental backups were running nearly ten hours per night and we were tired of dealing with tape," said Becky Gravett, IT manager at NextiraOne Federal. "We were also concerned about our ability to quickly recover from a disaster."

After looking at several different solutions, NextiraOne Federal chose ExaGrid's disk-based backup system with data deduplication. The ExaGrid system works along with the company's existing backup application, Symantec's Backup Exec.

"We had a fairly small budget and I really didn't think we would be able to get the functionality we needed.. We considered solutions from all the major players, including EMC Data Domain and Symantec," Gravett said. "In the end, we chose the ExaGrid system because it was cost-effective and it offered the scalability, integration with Backup Exec and strong data deduplication technology we were looking for."

Deduplication Maximizes Retention

Since installing the ExaGrid system, NextiraOne Federal has been able to reduce backup times and improve restores. Gravett said that ExaGrid's data deduplication helps

to maximize retention on the system and ensures that restores are quick and painless.

"Our backups are very fast now and ExaGrid's data deduplication does a great job at reducing our data so that we can keep as much information as possible on-site. We currently keep eight weeks of data on the system and because we have so much data at our fingertips, we can quickly and easily restore a mailbox or a proposal for a user in no time at all," she said. "With tape, it used to take forever to sort through tapes and restore the data. It was such a manual process. With the ExaGrid, I can restore files in minutes, not days."

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.

Fast Setup, Easy Management & Professional Customer Support

Setting up the ExaGrid system was simple and straightforward, said Gravett.



“The ExaGrid was incredibly easy to install. Once it was in the rack, I plugged it in, pulled out the manual and placed a call to our support engineer. We had it up and running, with the backup jobs fully configured within two hours,” she said.

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.

“We spend virtually no time at all on management and administration. I check out the nightly reports to make sure that things are running smoothly but I really haven’t had to touch the system since it was installed,” said Gravett. “Having the ExaGrid in place frees up my time and also takes the pressure off our help desk because they used to have to babysit the tapes and clean the drives just to keep the tape backups up and running. It probably saves us a couple of hours each week.”

Gravett also said that she likes the fact that NextiraOne Federal has an ExaGrid customer support engineer dedicated to the account.

“It’s unusual to have such a high level of support. We love the fact that we have a professional, knowledgeable resource to tap into if we need it. With some of the larger vendors, it’s easy to get lost in the shuffle when it comes to support. That doesn’t happen with ExaGrid,” she said.

Scalability to Grow

The ExaGrid system can easily be expanded to accommodate more data. 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.

“For us, scalability was a key factor in choosing the ExaGrid system. It’s very ‘plug and play,’ and we can expand the system

as we need to,” said Gravett. “The other thing we like about the ExaGrid is that we can choose to add a second system offsite for disaster recovery. It makes for a very flexible solution.”

Gravett said that NextiraOne Federal was so impressed with the ExaGrid system that the company decided to become a reseller.

“The ExaGrid system offers the right features at the right price and it solves a real problem facing many IT departments today. It was a terrific product for us and we hope our customers will think so too,” 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.

Intelligent Data Protection

ExaGrid is a cost-effective, scalable disk-based backup solution that replaces tape in your nightly backup process, enabling faster and more reliable backups at a price comparable to a new tape library. ExaGrid offers the only disk backup appliance with data deduplication purpose – built for backup that leverages a unique architecture optimized for performance, scalability and price.

The ExaGrid system is a plug-and-play disk backup appliance that works with existing backup applications. ExaGrid’s patented zone-level deduplication technology minimizes the amount of data to be stored by storing only the unique bytes across backups instead of storing the redundant data. This unique approach reduces the amount of disk space needed by a range of 10:1 to as high as 50:1 or more, delivering unparalleled performance in a cost-effective solution.

For more information about ExaGrid, please visit us at www.exagrid.com or call us at 1-800-868-6985.

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.