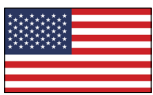EXAGRID®

North Kingstown School Department Earns an "A" for Better Backups with ExaGrid

USA

Key Benefits:

- Seamless integration with Veritas Backup Exec
- Setup took about 20 minutes
- Full backups reduced from 30 hours to 3
- Our support engineer is a Backup Exec guru and has been instrumental in helping streamline backup processes
- Management time went from 5 hours per week to 30 minutes

"The ExaGrid system gives us a great deal of flexibility. Not only can it grow in terms of capacity, but we can also add a second ExaGrid system at some point in the future to replicate data to another location and completely eliminate tape."

Richard Booth
Network Manager

Customer Overview

The North Kingstown school department is a K-12 school district serving North Kingstown, Rhode Island. With eight schools and an administration building, the school district educates over 4,400 students each year. North Kingstown has been recognized by the Rhode Island Department of Education for its excellence in student achievement and for significant gains on the New England Common Assessment Program made in the past five years. North Kingstown High School has been recognized by US News and World report as one of "America's Best High Schools," and many of our schools have been ranked as Commended and Leading by the RI Department of Education.

Long Backups Force IT Department to Hit the Books in Search of a New Solution

The North Kingstown school department has nearly 5,000 student, faculty and user accounts on its network. The school department centralizes most of its data and performs full backups each Monday and incremental backups throughout the rest of the week. Each weekend, the IT department backs up data from different schools throughout the district. However, the school department had outgrown its tape library and backups often took 30 hours or more, resulting network slowdowns and sliding backup windows.

"We simply outgrew the capacity of our tape library and we constantly had to feed it tapes just to complete nightly backups," said Richard Booth, Network Manager at the North Kingstown School Department. "We knew we needed a new solution and began looking around at alternatives."

Initially, the school department considered building its own storage area network.

"Backing up to disk would have helped, but we would have been backing up the same data over and over again without data deduplication," said Booth. "We learned about ExaGrid and really liked its data deduplication technology because it only saves the changes from backup to backup. It just made so much sense."

ExaGrid System Provides Data Deduplication, Works with Existing Backup Application and Tape Library

The North Kingstown school department chose the ExaGrid system and installed it in its main datacenter. The ExaGrid system works with the school department's existing backup application, Veritas Backup Exec.

Tape copies from the ExaGrid system are also made on a monthly basis using the department's

existing tape library for offsite DR purposes.

"We were able to leverage both our existing backup application and our tape library, which not only helped out in terms of cost but also in terms of our learning curve," said Booth. "The ExaGrid was also easy to set up, and I barely needed to look at the manual to install it. I simply plugged it into the network, stepped through a few configuration screens and it was up and running with Backup Exec. Then, I just pointed the shares to the ExaGrid instead of the tape library and it was done. All in all, setting up the ExaGrid took about 20 minutes."

Since installing the ExaGrid system, the school department has upgraded its network and is now seeing its backups completed in just a few hours.

"Our backups are now running very quickly and are completed well within our backup windows," said Booth. "We've also been very happy with ExaGrid's data deduplication capabilities. It's extremely effective at reducing our data and it enables us to maximize the amount of data we keep on the system. It's really amazing," said Booth.

ExaGrid writes backups directly to a disk-cache Landing Zone, avoiding inline processing and ensuring the highest possible backup performance, which results in the shortest backup window. Adaptive Deduplication performs deduplication and replication in parallel with

backups for a strong recovery point (RPO). As data is being deduplicated to the repository, it can also be replicated to a second ExaGrid site or the public cloud for disaster recovery (DR).

Scalability to Add Capacity, Flexibility to Add Disaster Recovery Site

For Booth, scalability was also an important factor in choosing ExaGrid. The ExaGrid system can easily scale to accommodate data growth. ExaGrid's software makes the system highly scalable – appliances of any size or age can be mixed and matched in a single system. A single scale-out system can take in up to a 2.7PB full backup plus retention at an ingest rate of up to 488TB per hour.

ExaGrid appliances contain not just disk but also processing power, memory, and bandwidth. When the system needs to expand, additional appliances are simply added to the existing system. The system scales linearly, maintaining a fixed-length backup window as data grows so customers only pay for what they need, when they need it.

Data is deduplicated into a non-network-facing Repository Tier with automatic load balancing and global deduplication across all repositories.

"The ExaGrid system gives us a great deal of flexibility. Not only can it grow in terms of capacity, but we can also add a second ExaGrid system at some point in the future to replicate data to another location and completely eliminate tape," said Booth.

Outstanding Customer Support

"We've been surprised at the high level of support we get from ExaGrid. Our support engineer is a Backup Exec guru and has been instrumental in helping us streamline our backup processes and to make sure that everything is configured and tuned correctly. For example, one of our remote schools is Apple-based. We initially had difficulty getting Backup Exec to work with the Macs, but our support person worked through the problem and resolved it even though it wasn't an ExaGrid issue." said Booth. "It's been a very positive experience. Typically, you expect a support engineer to sort of go through the motions but our ExaGrid engineer has the ability to remote into our system and the knowledge to solve any problem that comes up."

The ExaGrid system was designed to be easy to set up and operate. ExaGrid's industry-leading level 2 senior support engineers are assigned to individual customers, ensuring they always work with the same engineer. Customers never have to repeat themselves to various support staff, and issues get resolved quickly.

Booth estimates that he had been spending five hours per week managing tape. With the ExaGrid system, he now spends 30 minutes.

"Once a week I check the ExaGrid system to make sure everything is running smoothly," said Booth. "Our backups are all automated with the ExaGrid and we've reduced our reliance on tape tremendously. Just knowing that our backups are completed flawlessly every night is a wonderful thing."

ExaGrid and Veritas Backup Exec

Veritas Backup Exec provides cost-effective, high-performance backup and recovery – including continuous data protection for Microsoft Exchange servers, Microsoft SQL servers, file servers, and workstations. High-performance agents and options provide fast, flexible, granular protection and scalable management of local and remote server backups.

Organizations using Veritas Backup Exec can look to ExaGrid Tiered Backup Storage for nightly backups. ExaGrid sits behind existing backup applications, such as Veritas Backup Exec, providing faster and more reliable backups and restores. In a network running Veritas Backup Exec, using ExaGrid 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 ExaGrid for backup to disk.

Intelligent Data Protection

ExaGrid's turnkey disk-based backup system combines enterprise drives with zone-level data deduplication, delivering a disk-based solution that is far more cost effective than simply backing up to disk with deduplication or using backup software deduplication to disk. ExaGrid's patented zone-level deduplication reduces the disk space needed by a range of 10:1 to 50:1, depending on the data types and retention periods, by storing only the unique objects across backups instead of redundant data. Adaptive Deduplication performs deduplication and replication in parallel with backups. As data is being deduplicated to the repository, it is also replicated to a second ExaGrid site or the public cloud for disaster recovery (DR).

About ExaGrid

ExaGrid provides Tiered Backup Storage with a unique disk-cache Landing Zone that enables fastest backups and restores, a Repository Tier that offers the lowest cost for long-term retention and enables ransomware recovery, and scale-out architecture which includes full appliances with up to 2.7PB full backup in a single system.

Learn more at **www.exagrid.com**.

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