



Northeast Metro 916 Intermediate School District Does Its Homework on Tiered Backup Storage and Chooses ExaGrid

NORTHEAST METRO 916
Intermediate School District



USA

Key Benefits:

- Full backups went from taking all weekend to 8 hours
- Up and running in 1 hour
- Demonstrating dedupe rates as high as 53:1
- Very proactive customer support

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Yvonne Anderson

Supervisor of Information Systems

Customer Overview

Located throughout the east metro area of White Bear Lake, Minnesota, the Northeast Metro 916 Intermediate School District provides programs to member districts that enable members to better serve their students. Northeast Metro 916 responds to the unique needs of students, educators, and school districts with innovation, quality, and trusted experience.

Limited Retention and Long Backup Windows with Tape

The IT staff at Northeast Metro 916 is responsible for providing backup for all of the district's network resources. They also provide backup for the document imaging data for three other member districts. The organization backed up approximately 1TB of data each week to tape but found that retention and lengthy backup windows were becoming more and more of a problem as its data continued to grow.

The task of tape backups was very time consuming. “It was just a very manual process,” said Yvonne Anderson, supervisor of information systems at Northeast Metro 916. “We would start the backup on Friday evening and it wouldn't finish until late on Sunday,” said Anderson.

Combined with the inherent manual process of backing up to tape was the failure Northeast Metro 916 experienced at the end of their fiscal year – the worst possible time – effectively crippling their backup process. To reduce their backup window, Anderson and her IT staff undertook the task of evaluating disk-based backup solutions that were compatible with their existing backup application, Veritas Backup Exec.

Solution Provides Data Deduplication Ratio as High as 53:1, Backup Window Reduced to Four Hours

After considering its options, Northeast Metro 916 chose a two-site ExaGrid disk-based backup system with data deduplication. ExaGrid's approach to backup and data deduplication stood out from the other vendors they considered. They liked the fact that the ExaGrid provides faster backup times because the system writes the data out to disk and then deduplicates it after it's backed up.



Since installing the ExaGrid system, the district is experiencing average deduplication ratios of 17:1 with some file types being deduplicated at a rate as high as 53:1. Their backup window has been reduced from a weekend to a mere eight hours. Anderson comments that her IT team has been able to reduce the amount of time they spend on managing and administering backups, and in addition, they're not spending money on tape anymore.

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).

Easy Installation and Management, Responsive Support

Installing the ExaGrid system was an easy process, according to Anderson. All that's required is to unpack the unit, rack it, hook up the cables and work with ExaGrid's support team to configure it. A system can typically be up and running in just an hour or so.

“The best thing about upgrading to the ExaGrid is that the process just works,” comments Anderson. “We set the backups and they run; there is very little work for me or my staff to do.”

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.

According to Anderson, her team has had a good experience with ExaGrid’s customer support. Northeast Metro 916 likes the self-monitoring and remote support services ExaGrid provides. She says, “Most of the time, my ExaGrid engineer knows about a potential problem before I do!”

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.

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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