Global Engineering Firm Prefers ExaGrid Over Data Domain for Price/Performance

PERMASTEELISA GROUP

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Crystal Utz
Systems Administrator
Permasteelisa North America

Key Benefits:

- ExaGrid system fits easily into existing backup infrastructure
- The system easily scales to accommodate growing data
- Post-process deduplication and the ability to run backups in parallel help to shorten backup window
- Superior customer support model provides assigned engineer who is 'responsive and experienced'

Customer Overview

Permasteelisa Group is a worldwide leading contractor in the engineering, project management, manufacturing, and installation of architectural envelopes and interior systems. Present on four continents, with a network of over 50 companies in more than 30 countries and 11 production plants, the Group generates a total turnover of around 1.4 billion euro per year.

ExaGrid Replaces Failing Tape Library and Improves Retention

Permasteelisa's IT department was wasting precious resources struggling with the company's unreliable tape library, and the constant breakdowns often left the staff with no other choice but to back up the firm's growing amounts of data to a single tape drive.

"We burned through four tape libraries in the last few years, and it seemed like we were constantly struggling with mechanical issues, failed backup jobs, and lack of retention," said Crystal Utz, systems administrator for Permasteelisa North America. "Finally, we decided to look for a disk-based solution capable of consistently backing up our data, improving retention, and reducing the amount of time and energy we were wasting on managing backups."

Utz said that after looking at several solutions on the market, Permasteelisa narrowed down the field to systems from ExaGrid and EMC Data Domain.

"The ExaGrid system provided all the functionality we needed at a better price than the EMC Data Domain system," she said. "We also liked that we could use the ExaGrid system along with our existing backup application, CA ARCserve Backup, so our learning curve was minimized."

Easily Scalable to Accommodate Increased Backup Requirements

Permasteelisa initially purchased an ExaGrid EX2000 unit and installed it in the firm's Windsor, Connecticut datacenter. The system was recently expanded to handle increased amounts of backup data.

"Expanding the ExaGrid system up was simple. We bought an EX3000, and I installed it into the datacenter rack. Then our ExaGrid support engineer accessed the system remotely and finished the configuration to add it to the GRID. It really couldn't have been easier," said Utz.

ExaGrid uses a GRID-based configuration, so when the system needs to expand, additional appliance nodes are attached to the GRID, bringing with them not only additional disk but also processing power, memory, and bandwidth. This type of configuration allows the system to maintain all the aspects of performance as the amount of data grows. In addition, as new ExaGrid appliance nodes are added to the GRID, the ExaGrid automatically load balances available capacity, maintaining a virtual pool of storage that is shared across the GRID.

Post-Process Data Deduplication Increases Data Retention, Speeds Backups

Utz said that ExaGrid's post-process data deduplication helps to maximize retention while ensuring that backups run as quickly as possible.

"We back up a lot of large SolidWorks and AutoCAD files, and ExaGrid's data deduplication technology does a great job at reducing our data so that we're able to keep three months of data on the system," she said. "Restores are also far more convenient than tape. We can restore a file

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quickly right from the system, and we don't have to deal with the hassles of tape."

ExaGrid combines standard compression along with zone-level data deduplication, which stores changes from backup to backup instead of storing full file copies. 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. 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. When a second site is used, the cost savings are even greater because ExaGrid's zone-level data deduplication technology moves only the changes from backup to backup, requiring minimal WAN bandwidth.

Permasteelista's backup times are significantly shorter now that the ExaGrid system is in place, Utz said.

"We're now able to run multiple backup jobs simultaneously to the ExaGrid system. One of the biggest differences for us is that we can now run differential backups during the week, and they take less than an hour," she said. "It's so nice that I don't have to worry about changing tapes or troubleshooting a tape library."

Easy-to-Manage System, Experienced Customer Support

Utz said that she spends far less time managing backups with the ExaGrid system.

"From a management perspective, the ExaGrid system is far easier than tape. There's really not too much to manage – once it's set up, it works," she said. "We've also had a very good experience with our ExaGrid's support engineer. Our engineer is extremely responsive and experienced."

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.

"The ExaGrid system was cost effective, and it fit into our existing backup infrastructure," said Utz. "We're far more confident in our ability to restore data than we were with tape, and it's reduced the amount of time we spend on backups. I'd highly recommend the system."

ExaGrid and CA ARCserve Backup

ExaGrid's turnkey disk-based backup system combines high quality disk 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 zone-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 backing up to straight disk. 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.

Intelligent Data Protection

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