



# Randolph Township Schools Opts for ExaGrid over Data Domain for Scalability



USA

## Key Benefits:

- Data deduplication eliminates redundant data and mushrooming storage needs
- No future forklift upgrade – scale-out architecture provides simple scalability with no performance degradation
- ‘Set it and forget it’ system requires much less daily oversight
- Overall deduplication of 20:1 increases retention

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**Peter Emmel**  
Network Administrator

## Customer Overview

*The Randolph Township Schools are a comprehensive community public school district that serves children in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade from Randolph, in Morris County, New Jersey, United States.*

## Effort to Streamline Backups Leads to Scalable ExaGrid System

The Randolph Township Schools had been backing up data from each of its ten buildings to multiple different local devices, but the district’s IT staff was concerned about its ability to get consistent backups because equipment and processes varied at each building.

“We had a whole host of different backup devices, servers, and procedures for each building and really needed a centralized approach to ensure that we were consistently and efficiently backing up all our data,” said Peter Emmel, network administrator for the Randolph Township Schools. “The other issue we had was redundant data. Because we have multiple copies of the same information, our data was mushrooming out of control, and we were running out of storage to do certain backups.”

## Scalability to Accommodate Future Growth

The school district decided to look for a new backup solution and narrowed down the field to disk-based backup solutions from ExaGrid and Dell EMC Data Domain.

The Randolph Township Schools installed an ExaGrid disk-based backup system with data deduplication in its main data center and is planning to deploy another unit offsite for disaster recovery later this year. The ExaGrid system works along with the district’s existing backup application, Veritas Backup Exec.

“When it came down to it, the ExaGrid solution was far more expandable than the Dell EMC Data Domain system. With the Data Domain unit, we worried that if we had to expand the amount of available storage, we’d need to replace the whole system,” Emmel said. “ExaGrid’s scale-out architecture will enable us to add capacity or performance by simply plugging in another unit.”

ExaGrid’s appliance models can be mixed and matched into a single scale-out system allowing



a full backup of up to 2.7PB with a combined ingest rate of 488TB/hr, in a single system. The appliances automatically join the scale-out system. Each appliance includes the appropriate amount of processor, memory, disk, and bandwidth for the data size. By adding compute with capacity, the backup window remains fixed in length as the data grows. Automatic load balancing across all repositories allows for full utilization of all appliances. Data is deduplicated into an offline repository, and additionally, data is globally deduplicated across all repositories.

This combination of capabilities in a turnkey appliance makes the ExaGrid system easy to install, manage, and scale. ExaGrid’s architecture provides lifetime value and investment protection that no other architecture can match.

“Installing the ExaGrid system has taken all the headaches out of our backups. We’re able to get a far greater breadth of backups than we ever could before,” said Emmel.

## 20:1 Data Deduplication Maximizes Retention

Emmel said that retention was an issue prior to installing the ExaGrid system. The school district was able to keep only two full backups of its mail system at any given time but now can keep four weekly backups and six monthly backups on the ExaGrid.

"We're seeing overall data deduplication ratios of 20:1, so we're able to store more information for a longer period of time. It's made a huge difference for us," he said. "We back up all of our data to the ExaGrid, from student data to business data, and I now have the freedom to perform full backups any time I want. Our dedupe ratio of 20:1 is amazing. We're able to back up 11.4 TB of data in only 5.8TB of space."

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).



## Management Time Reduced from 15 Hours per Week to Almost Zero

Emmel said that since installing the ExaGrid system, the IT staff spends far less time managing backups than before.

"We were spending about three hours a day checking backups, but that time has been reduced to almost nothing since we began using the ExaGrid system. We have no retention issues, our daily, weekly, and monthly backups are scheduled and go off without a hitch, and I receive emails confirming the status of our backups automatically every day," he said. "We also like that we can restore files with a few keystrokes."

## Seamless Integration with Veritas Backup Exec, Proactive Customer Support

"One of the key factors in choosing the ExaGrid system was its tight integration with Backup Exec. We already had Backup Exec and we were very familiar with it. Because of that, we were able to plug in the ExaGrid system and get it up and running in less than three minutes," Emmel said.

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.

"The ExaGrid system is very easy to use, and I can manage it through Backup Exec. It really is a 'set it and forget it' type of system," he said.

"I've also had a very good experience with ExaGrid support. I've reached out to our support engineer to ask a couple of Backup Exec-related questions, and there was never any finger pointing. Our ExaGrid engineer was able to guide me through the issue even though it wasn't an ExaGrid problem."

Emmel continued, "We've been very happy with the ExaGrid product and with ExaGrid as a whole. It's a very thorough company and everyone, from the sales organization to the support staff, is knowledgeable and up front about the product's capabilities, and the product absolutely works as advertised. That's not always the case with technology companies, but it's been our experience with ExaGrid," Emmel said.

## 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.

## 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](http://www.exagrid.com).