

Rio Hondo College Learns About Faster Backups , Increased Retention with ExaGrid

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Van Vuong
Network Specialist
Rio Hondo College

Customer Overview

Rio Hondo College, located in Southeast Los Angeles County enrolls over 20,000 students each semester. Rio Hondo's educational programs prepare students for transfer to four-year colleges and universities, grant two-year degrees in a number of specialties, issue certificates in technical or professional fields, provide contract training for employer workforces, and offer community service classes in subjects ranging from computer skills to cultural event fieldtrips. The college graduates close to 600 students every year, awarding two-year, Associate of Arts/Sciences degrees and nearly 500 specialty certificates.

Growing Amounts of Data Leads to Frustration

Rio Hondo had been backing up its data to disk for over a year. Moving from tape backups to disk-to-disk-to-tape (D2D2T) gave the college better backups and restores and reduced its reliance on tape, but as Rio Hondo's data grew, its IT staff struggled with retention. Without data de-duplication, the D2D2T solution could only hold two days worth of backups before it had to be offloaded to tape.

Rio Hondo's IT staff had been researching new technology solutions for its student records system and was working with other colleges and universities to get recommendations. In doing their research, the IT staff discovered that another college had solved similar D2D2T challenges with ExaGrid.

"We liked the speed and convenience of backing up to disk, but we needed a solution that offered data reduction so that we could keep more data locally on the system," said Van Vuong, network specialist at Rio Hondo College. "It was clear to us that the ExaGrid system was the ideal solution for our backup problems and it came highly recommended. The ExaGrid has the data reduction we were looking for along with the scalability we need to accommodate future growth."

High Marks for ExaGrid-CommVault Combination

Rio Hondo purchased an ExaGrid disk-based backup system to back up nearly 40 servers, including those used by various academic departments, accounting and contract management offices and financial aid offices. At the recommendation of the IT staff at the other college, Rio Hondo also chose CommVault Galaxy™ as its new backup application.

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Data De-duplication Delivers Increased Retention, 50 Percent Reduction in Backup Window

Rio Hondo is now able to keep four weeks of backups on its ExaGrid system. Every the system is backed up to tape and the tapes are sent to a safe on campus.



“Having so many backups available on the ExaGrid is convenient,” said Vuong. “If one of our users loses a document we don’t have to waste time going back through tapes to restore the data.”

ExaGrid combines last backup compression along with data de-duplication, 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 de-duplication is performed post-process after the data is stored to reduce data.

Since installing the ExaGrid system, Rio Hondo has experienced a 50 percent reduction in its backup window. Weekly full backups that took 24 hours using D2D2T now take 12 hours to complete, and nightly differential backups have been reduced from eight hours to four hours.

Easy Scalability

Scalability is also important because Rio Hondo’s data has grown so quickly in the past. ExaGrid’s GRID architecture provides easy scalability, so the system can grow as Rio Hondo’s backup requirements grow. When plugged into a switch, additional ExaGrid systems virtualize into one another, appearing as a single system to the backup server, and load balancing of all data across servers is automatic.

“Because our data will only continue to grow, it’s nice to know that we can easily scale our ExaGrid system simply by adding additional units,” said Vuong. “The ExaGrid has been extremely efficient at reducing our data and we have a lot of room on our system, but ExaGrid’s easy scalability ensures that we have a backup strategy for the long run.”

ExaGrid and CommVault Galaxy

CommVault Galaxy Backup and Recovery software contains extensive capabilities to simplify the management of backup

media resources. Galaxy software writes backup data to a broad collection of storage devices, including disk as a media target. This ability to write to magnetic disk as a functional equal of all other media types while exploiting the random access nature of the disk media sets Galaxy software apart.

Organizations using Galaxy can look to ExaGrid as an alternative to tape for nightly backups. ExaGrid sits behind existing backup applications, such as Galaxy, providing faster and more reliable backups and restores. In a network running Galaxy, using ExaGrid in place of a tape backup system 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 the ExaGrid for onsite backup to disk.

Intelligent Data Protection

ExaGrid’s turnkey disk-based backup system combines high quality SATA drives with byte-level data de-duplication, delivering a disk-based solution that is more cost effective than standard SATA drives. ExaGrid’s byte-level data de-duplication technology stores only the changes from backup to backup instead of storing full file copies, reducing the amount of disk space needed by a range of 10:1 to 50:1, or more, resulting in a solution that is 25 to 30% the cost of standard SATA drives.

ExaGrid is easy to install and use and works seamlessly with popular backup applications, so organizations can retain their investment in existing applications.

ExaGrid can be used at a primary site and at a second site to supplement or eliminate offsite tapes with a live data repository or for disaster recovery. When a second site is used, the cost savings are even greater because ExaGrid’s byte-level data de-duplication technology moves only changes, requiring minimal WAN bandwidth.

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.