Disk Backup With Deduplication: The Remedy for Backup and DR Woes at the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada

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"When we were evaluating solutions, we wanted something that would scale as our organization and data requirements grew. ExaGrid gives us that ability to scale in the future while continuing to leverage our current investment."

**Christian Monette
Senior Network and Security Administrator
Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada**

Customer Overview

Based in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada is the national professional association that oversees the medical education of specialists in Canada. Consisting of over 42,000 specialists, The Royal College is dedicated to promoting sound health policies through national certification examinations and lifelong learning programs. The organization's IT department is made up of 33 members that handle various areas of IT operations including network administration, help desk support, application development, Oracle administration and support, end-user training and various administrative support staff.

Cost-effective ExaGrid Improves Backup and DR Capabilities

The Royal College's IT department began searching for a disk-based solution after the organization felt that it had run its course with its previous tape solution. According to Senior Network and Security Administrator Christian Monette, backing up company data from file servers, Oracle databases and Exchange, was very cumbersome and more importantly, very unreliable. The process of backing up to tape was very sequential as the backups went from one server to the next. With the ExaGrid, according to Monette, the organization could run all jobs simultaneously – making the process much more efficient.

"We'd start our monthly backups at 7 a.m. on Saturday and they would only get finished at noon on Monday – sometimes even longer than that," said Monette. "We felt that we needed something that could help us reduce the amount of our stored data and replication to also improve our disaster recovery capabilities."

After evaluating different tape solutions and alternative disk-based solutions, the Royal College selected a two-site ExaGrid system. The ExaGrid system works alongside the organization's two existing backup applications, Symantec BackupExec and CA ARCserve Backup. The primary ExaGrid system is situated in the main data center in Ottawa and data is automatically replicated to the organization's disaster recovery location.

"We looked closely at different options but when it came down to overall performance capabilities and ease of use, ExaGrid was the clear leader," said Monette.

ExaGrid's post-process data deduplication processes data after it has landed on the system, ensuring the fastest backup times possible. ExaGrid combines last backup compression along with data deduplication, 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 deduplication is performed post-process after the data is stored to reduce data.

The data deduplication technology also helps speed the transmission of data between the Royal College's two ExaGrid systems because only changes are moved between sites, minimizing the amount of bandwidth needed.

Fast Restores, Scalability for Growing Data Requirements

The Royal College's IT staff have also noticed a significant improvement in the amount of time and resources spent on restoring files.

"The ability to restore data quickly and easily is really where the ExaGrid shines," said Monette. The IT staff often gets requests to restore

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files that are weeks or months old, and restoring that data from tape used to take hours or days – or not at all, according to Monette. Historically, his staff would get the requests for a restore but quick turnarounds were few and far between. Occasionally, the IT staff would get so busy that they would miss changing tapes and backups just wouldn't get done. Other times, there were issues with damaged tapes or missing data from tapes.

According to Monette, because the ExaGrid system never moves and is there when they need it, his team can store months of data on the system and have that history available at their fingertips.

"Restoring data from tape was a huge hassle but with the ExaGrid, our data is now always available at our fingertips for restores," said Monette. "We're saving a lot of money on tape and cutting down time that used to be spent on managing tape libraries to now focus on other IT projects."

The ExaGrid system can easily be scaled to meet increased demand. ExaGrid's GRID computing software makes the system highly scalable, and when plugged into a switch, different sized configurations can be mixed and matched into a single GRID system with capacities of up to a 60TB full backup plus retention. Once virtualized, they appear as a single system to the backup server, and load balancing of all data across servers is automatic.

"When we were evaluating solutions, we wanted something that would scale as our organization and data requirements grew," said Monette. "ExaGrid gives us that ability to scale in the future while continuing to leverage our current investment."

Expert and Responsive Customer Support

ExaGrid's trained, in-house engineers provide dedicated support to individual accounts.

"The ExaGrid support staff is simply phenomenal," said Monette. "We haven't had many technical issues with the ExaGrid but the few times we have, the staff was always very responsive and knowledgeable, working relentlessly until a solution was achieved."

ExaGrid and Symantec Backup Exec

Symantec Backup Exec provides cost-effective, high-performance, and certified disk-to-disk-to-tape backup and recovery – including continuous data protection for Microsoft Exchange, SQL, 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 Symantec Backup Exec can look to ExaGrid as an alternative to tape for nightly backups. ExaGrid sits behind existing backup applications, such as Symantec Backup Exec, providing faster and more reliable backups and restores. In a network running Symantec Backup Exec, 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.

ExaGrid and CA ARCserve Backup

CA ARCserve Backup delivers reliable, enterprise-class data protection across multiple hardware and software platforms. Its proven technology — unified by a single, easy-to-use interface — enables multi-tiered protection driven by business goals and policies.

Organizations using popular backup applications can look to ExaGrid as an alternative to tape for nightly backups. ExaGrid sits behind existing backup applications to provide faster and more reliable backups and restores.

Intelligent Data Protection

ExaGrid's turnkey disk-based backup system combines high quality SATA drives with byte-level data deduplication, delivering a disk-based solution that is more cost effective than standard SATA drives. ExaGrid's byte-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 standard SATA drives.

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.

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**.