SIGMA Marketing Group Dramatically Improves Backup Speed, Responds Quickly to Data Loss with ExaGrid

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>
> **Rob Spencer**
> **Systems Administrator**
> **SIGMA Marketing Group**

Customer Overview

Established in 1985, SIGMA Marketing Group is an integrated marketing services company with a national client base of Fortune 1000 companies. Headquartered in Rochester, New York, SIGMA assists its clients in creating more profitable customer relationships through analytics, strategic one-to-one communication programs, and marketing technology.

Long Backup Times and Retention Issues Led to ExaGrid Purchase

SIGMA Marketing Group had been backing up its data to a combination of tape and disk, but long backup times and stringent retention policies made it difficult for the company's IT department to adequately protect all of its information.

"It was nearly impossible for us to get complete backups because our backup jobs were taking so long," said Rob Spencer, systems administrator at SIGMA Marketing Group. "The other big issue we had was retention. Our retention policies vary from client to client, and some require that we keep backup data for up to two years. We were having difficulty meeting those goals with tape and decided that the time was right to implement a disk-based solution when the maintenance contract was up on our tape library."

ExaGrid Works with Existing Backup Application, Provides Strong Data Deduplication to Maximize Disk Space

After looking at various solutions, SIGMA chose ExaGrid's disk-based backup system with data deduplication to work along with the company's existing backup application, Symantec Backup Exec.

"One of the big factors in choosing the ExaGrid system was its tight integration with Backup Exec. The two products work very well together," said Spencer. "We also like its

data deduplication technology, and we're seeing tremendous dedupe ratios. What would have taken a hundred tapes now just takes a fraction of the available disk space on our ExaGrid system."

The ExaGrid system 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. When a second site is used, the cost savings are even greater because ExaGrid's zone-level data deduplication technology moves only changes, requiring minimal WAN bandwidth.

Backup Times Reduced by a Third, Fast Restores Enable IT Staff to Respond Quickly when Disaster Struck

Spencer said that since installing the ExaGrid system, SIGMA's backup window has been reduced by a third, and the IT department easily completes nightly backup jobs.

"Our backup jobs are now completed correctly each and every night, and we're able to meet our retention goals," he said.

Spencer got to test SIGMA's ability to recover from a disaster recently when the company lost a storage array and had to restore a significant amount of data quickly.

EXAGRID™

"Our storage array crashed recently due to a dual power supply failure, and we were able to recover our data easily thanks to the ExaGrid system. It was very fast, and we didn't have to dig through offsite tapes. Everything was on-site and ready to restore. It was quite a relief," he said. "It's nice to have such a large amount of data at my fingertips. We archive long-term storage to tape, but we can go back through a month of data – over 100TB – if we need to right on the ExaGrid. It really is unheard of."

Easy Setup and Installation, Industry-Leading Customer support

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 dedicated to individual accounts. The system is fully supported and was designed and manufactured for maximum uptime with redundant, hot-swappable components.

"We had the ExaGrid up and running in less than a half a day. It was a smooth, seamless process," said Spencer. "We've also had a terrific experience with ExaGrid's customer support team. I have good relationships with quite a few members of the support team, and they're simply excellent. They're always there to answer my questions and they're extremely knowledgeable."

Scalability to Handle Increased Demand

The ExaGrid system can easily be expanded to accommodate more data. 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 130TB 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.

"As our business grows, we will be adding more vertical markets, and we need to ensure that we can handle the additional data and retention policies that our customers demand. Just recently, we brought on a couple of new customers who required on-demand retention policies, and we were able to meet their needs quickly with our VMware environment and the ExaGrid system because everything was in place. The ExaGrid system is extremely scalable, and it will enable us to meet our backup needs now and into the future."

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.

Intelligent Data Protection

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 standard SATA drives.

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.

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**.

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