



Sky Deutschland Chooses Scalable ExaGrid-Veeam Solution for Its Backup Environment

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Anis Smajlovic
Senior Solution Architect



GERMANY

Key Benefits:

- Sky's POC reveals that ExaGrid integrates better with Veeam than deduplication appliances
- Switch to ExaGrid-Veeam solution results in faster backup and restore performance
- Scalability of ExaGrid and Veeam ideal for Sky's data growth across multiple data centers
- Sky's IT staff find that 'ExaGrid support is so much better than support from other vendors'

Customer Overview

Sky Deutschland is one of the leading entertainment providers in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The program offering includes the best live sports, exclusive series, new film releases, a wide range of children's programming, exciting documentaries and entertaining shows - many of them Sky Originals. Sky Deutschland, with its headquarters in Unterföhring near Munich, is part of the Comcast Group and belongs to Europe's leading entertainment company Sky Limited.

ExaGrid Chosen for Integration with Veeam

The IT staff at Sky Deutschland had been backing up data to an inline, scale-up deduplication appliance. The staff found the solution complex to use and difficult to manage. As that solution reached its end of life, the staff looked into a replacement.

The IT staff had decided to switch to Veeam for a backup application, and decided to contact the backup storage solutions recommended on the Veeam website, including ExaGrid.

“At first, we were a bit wary of ExaGrid as it wasn't a name we knew very well. However, after we met with the ExaGrid team, we decided to move forward with a proof of concept (POC) and we were sent an ExaGrid system to test in our environment. I also did more research about ExaGrid, and was impressed with its scale-out architecture and horizontal growth as oppose to vertical, which I normally only see for cloud solutions. I really liked the idea of a solution that we could add onto so that only pay for what we need,” said Anis Smajlovic, senior solution architect at Sky Deutschland.

“We decided to compare ExaGrid against other backup storage appliances, to see how well the different systems work with Veeam's Scale-Out Backup Repository (SOBR) feature in particular, and we realized that it works better with ExaGrid's architecture. It was easy to tell that Veeam and ExaGrid have a good partnership, because there is such integration between the products, especially as the Veeam Data Mover has been built into



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ExaGrid has integrated the Veeam Data Mover so that backups are written Veeam-to-Veeam versus Veeam-to-CIFS, which provides a 30% increase in backup performance. Veeam synthetic fulls can be created at a rate that is six times faster than any other solution. The combination of ExaGrid's and Veeam's industry-leading virtual server data protection solutions allows customers to utilize Veeam Backup & Replication in VMware, vSphere, and Microsoft Hyper-V virtual environments on ExaGrid's Tiered Backup Storage. This combination provides fast backups and efficient data storage as well as replication to an offsite location for disaster recovery (DR). Customers can use Veeam Backup & Replication's built-in source-side deduplication in concert with ExaGrid's disk-based backup system with Adaptive Deduplication to further shrink backups.



Scalability Important to Long-Term Planning

Sky Deutschland initially purchased the ExaGrid system it tested during the POC at its data center in Germany, and also scaled it out with additional appliances to accommodate the large amount of the data that the company needs to backup. Additional ExaGrid systems were later added at secondary datacenters in Italy and Germany, replicating data between the sites for geo-resilient data protection. Smajlovic appreciates that ExaGrid is flexible, allowing appliances to be easily moved and added to any site, no matter the location.

“Some backup storage vendors will not allow for hardware to be moved across countries. ExaGrid allows for any piece of hardware to be moved, so if we close a location and open an office somewhere else, we can move our ExaGrid systems as well. This was an important consideration for our long-term planning,” he said.

One the aspects Smajlovic appreciates about the combined solution of ExaGrid and Veeam is that the scale-out architecture of both ensures that backup and restore performance will not be affected by anticipated data growth, and that there will be no storage capacity issues with long-term retention. “When we need space, we can add more appliances to the system. Both solutions really scale out—we can add more as we need to. We don’t feel locked into something because there are so many configuration possibilities. It’s very a modular solution, so we can make adjustments and figure out how it fits best for us. For example, if we need more speed, then we will add more proxy servers from Veeam. That level of adjustment is completely flexible,” he said.

The ExaGrid system can easily scale to accommodate data growth. ExaGrid’s computing software makes the system highly scalable, and when plugged into a switch, appliances of any size or age can be mixed and matched in a single system with capacities of up to a 2.69PB full backup plus retention and an ingest rate of up to 488TB per hour. Once virtualized, they appear as a single system to the backup server, and load balancing of all data across servers is automatic.

Better Backup and Restore Performance

Smajlovic backs up Sky Deutschland’s data on a daily and monthly basis, with critical databases backed up as often as two to three times per day. There is a large amount of data to back up, which he anticipates will grow to about one petabyte, made up of

About ExaGrid

ExaGrid provides tiered backup storage with a unique disk-cache Landing Zone, long-term retention repository and scale-out architecture. ExaGrid’s Landing Zone enables the fastest backups, restores, and instant VM recoveries. The retention repository offers the lowest cost for long-term retention. ExaGrid’s scale-out architecture includes full appliances in a scalable system. Learn more at www.exagrid.com.

VMs, virtual and physical servers, databases, and more. He has been pleased with the backup and restore performance with his ExaGrid-Veeam solution. “Our backups are definitely faster. The difference in speed is partially because our previous solution was older and at its end of life, but partially because of ExaGrid’s architecture,” he said.

“I really like how ExaGrid handles deduplication, with the data is stored in a landing zone first and then moved to retention, so there’s no degradation of the data, making it faster to recover,” said Smajlovic. 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 so that an RTO and RPO can be easily met. Available system cycles are utilized to perform deduplication and offsite replication for an optimal recovery point at the disaster recovery site. Once complete, the onsite data is protected and immediately available in its full undeduplicated form for fast restores, VM Instant Recoveries, and tape copies while the offsite data is ready for disaster recovery.

Simple Backup Management with Quality Support

Smajlovic appreciates how easy it is to set up and manage the ExaGrid system. “I like that I can manage all of our ExaGrid appliances from one interface. ExaGrid is very easy to use to use, I introduced the system to our newer employees and they were able to use it without any issue on their second day at the office,” he said.

“From the beginning, the ExaGrid team has been supportive and great at teaching me about the system, answering every question I had so I didn’t need to look up. By the time we had finished testing the product, I had learned so much from my ExaGrid support engineer, that I was able to install the system on my own. ExaGrid support is so much better than support from other vendors because we don’t need to go through a ticketing system and explain everything from the beginning. We work with the same ExaGrid support engineer who helps us immediately, it almost feels like he works for us,” said Smajlovic.

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 level 2 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.

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