



'Smart' ExaGrid System Optimizes Veeam Backups, Providing 'Remarkable Throughput' for South Shore Neurologic Associates



USA

Key Benefits:

- ExaGrid's unique integration with Veeam improves throughput and reduces backup windows
- ExaGrid-Veeam combined deduplication resolves storage capacity issues
- 'Superior' ExaGrid support gives IT staff confidence in backing up mission-critical environment

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Troy Norr

Chief Information Officer

Customer Overview

South Shore Neurologic Associates, PC is a comprehensive neurologic care facility dedicated to alleviating the symptoms of neurological illness, neurological injury, and chronic pain through excellence in patient care, advocacy, service, education, and research. The facility has been providing neurologic care for people living in Suffolk County, Long Island since 1980.

Veeam Integration Key to Choosing Storage Solution

South Shore Neurologic Associates had been backing up its data to network-attached storage (NAS) appliances, using Veeam.

The IT staff found that backing up to that storage solution took too long and decided to look into other options. "We considered setting up a backup server with direct access storage, but realized it might not improve our backup environment and found it to be too costly," said Troy Norr, chief information officer (CIO) at South Shore Neurologic Associates. "We were introduced to ExaGrid, and its integration with Veeam was key to our decision in choosing ExaGrid as a new solution. We especially liked the ExaGrid-Veeam Accelerated Data Mover feature. ExaGrid's pricing and scalability also offered better value." South Shore Neurologic Associates installed an ExaGrid system that replicates to another ExaGrid system at a secondary site.

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. Since the Veeam Data Mover is not an open standard, it is far more secure than using CIFS and other open market protocols. In addition, because ExaGrid has integrated the Veeam Data Mover, Veeam synthetic fulls can be created six times faster than any other solution. ExaGrid stores the most recent Veeam backups in an unduplicated form in its Landing Zone and has the Veeam Data Mover running on each ExaGrid appliance and has a processor in each appliance in a scale-out architecture. This combination of Landing Zone, Veeam Data Mover, and scale-out compute provides the fastest Veeam synthetic fulls versus any other solution on the market.



'Smart System' Provides 'Remarkable' Throughput

Norr backs up a large variety of data at South Shore Neurologic Associates. "SQL is a big part of everything that we do. We have several mission-critical databases used by different departments in the organization. We have an MRI facility that uses a Radiology Information System (RIS) comprised of multiple components that are SQL-driven, storing dictation using Dragon Medical files, as well as patient information and scheduling, and including a Picture Archiving and Communication System (PACS) server where all the DICOM images are stored, and those take up a huge amount of data. That's all integrated into a suite application that is connected to the dissimilar systems with HL7 interfaces. In addition, we have an Electronic Health Records (EHR) system comprised of multiple hosts, which consists of a large amount of data to back up."

Norr has found that since switching to an ExaGrid-Veeam solution, backup windows are significantly shorter. "It used to take up to 14 hours for a full backup to land onto the NAS appliance, despite the fact that it had multiple inputs, multiple routes that the data could come in from. It was so slow, and sometimes if the other procedures were

occurring at the same time, either the procedure or the backup would fail. We don't have to worry about those issues anymore because that same full backup takes three-and-a-half hours with our ExaGrid system. It's just remarkable! If we were still using our older system, we would not experience the throughput that we're experiencing now. We needed our backups to be faster without changing our infrastructure, and ExaGrid has been a key component in making this happen.

"I like how flexible the ExaGrid system is with scheduling backup jobs and replication. We're able to block out time during the backup where we can change the throttling and bandwidth that is used so that it doesn't affect productivity. One of my favorite features of the ExaGrid system is how it handles deduplication. Veeam backs up the data and it goes right to the ExaGrid system, and once the backup is finished, it doesn't sit there like a dumb NAS box, but starts deduplication at that point so it doesn't slow down the whole process. The ExaGrid system is smart, and it can sense how busy the system is so that it starts deduplication and replication to a satellite office at an optimized time, without interrupting our other operations," he said.

Norr has also been impressed with how easily data is restored from the ExaGrid system. "ExaGrid has taken the guesswork out of restoring data. The system is smart and knows where to pull files from. We simply open Veeam and select the backup job to restore from and ExaGrid takes it from there. It's great that we don't need to be very granular."

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).

Data Deduplication Maximizes Storage Capacity

South Shore Neurologic Associates, like many other medical providers, must keep some data for up to seven years, and even longer for patient data regarding children, which must be kept until the patient turns 21. "We used to run into storage capacity issues with our NAS appliances. Now that we're using the combined deduplication from Veeam and ExaGrid, we're saving quite a bit of space. We used to have to scramble to back up over 50TB on our NAS appliances, but thanks to deduplication, our backups have been reduced to 1TB, and we still have 50% storage capacity available, even though we are backing up so much data," said Norr. "When we first set up our ExaGrid system,

I was a bit concerned, as half of the storage was designated for the landing zone and half was designated for retention. The ExaGrid team sized our system accurately when we first purchased it, and they accounted for five-year growth, so it will take some time to grow into before we need to make any changes to the environment."

'Superior' Customer Support

Norr appreciates the high level of support he receives for his ExaGrid systems. "ExaGrid's customer support is superior to the support we've received from other vendors. We always receive a quick response, and since we are working with a device in a mission-critical environment, it's comforting that we can expect stellar support. Our assigned ExaGrid support engineer has been helpful since our systems were initially installed, and has consistently followed up with us to make sure everything is going well. He is very knowledgeable and monitors our systems, letting us know if any issues need to be resolved or if upgrades are available."

"Having such a reliable system has freed me up to do other things. Aside from a quick glance at the backup report, there isn't much maintenance involved. It's everything I was looking for, a backup solution that works well for our environment at a reasonable cost," said Norr.



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.