EXAGRID®

Insurer Takes the Risk Out of Backups with ExaGrid

USA RISK GROUP

USA

Key Benefits:

- Post-process deduplication ensures the company's backups run as quickly as possible

- Deduplication is performed by Veeam and then again when the data hits the ExaGrid landing zone

- The company can easily and painlessly scale the system as data increases

- ExaGrid appliances are backward compatible, so USA Risk Group protects its investment in the future

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Josh Jarvis
Chief Technology Officer

Customer Overview

USA Risk Group is the independent alternative risk advisor with proven integrity and innovative ideas that has been taking insurance in a different new direction since 1981. Their communications team works directly with our company's leadership to ensure all news and updates about our organization and the captive industry are shared for all constituents.

Concerns about Disaster Recovery, Expanding Backup Window, Virtualization

USA Risk Group manages insurance programs for Fortune 500 organizations, so it's imperative that client and business data is fully backed up and easily recoverable. The company has a significant number of offshore locations and had been backing up to a tape library in a Vermont colocation center, but the firm's IT staff was concerned about its ability to retrieve data in the event of a disaster, and backup times were getting increasingly longer.

"Technically, the information we back up isn't our own, so to me, it's even more critical that the data is properly backed up and recoverable at a moment's notice," said Josh Jarvis, Chief Technology Officer for USA Risk Group. "Tape is unreliable, and we were concerned about disaster recovery.

We started to push up against our backup window and were worried about how that would affect our network speed."

ExaGrid and Veeam Deliver Faster, More Reliable Backups

According to Jarvis, USA Risk Group decided to search for a disk-based backup appliance capable of delivering fast backups and restores and chose ExaGrid after looking at several different solutions. "We researched a couple of other backup solutions, but the issue we had with every single one of them was the amount of preprocess work that needed to be done before the data hit the disk. In each case, backup speed was a major concern for us," he said. "With the ExaGrid system, the data is backed up to a landing zone before the deduplication process begins so backups run as quickly as possible. And the proof is there – our backups are significantly faster than they were before."

USA Risk Group virtualized much of its environment at the same time it implemented the ExaGrid system and decided to install Veeam Backup & Replication because of its tight integration with ExaGrid.

"We are really happy with how the two products work together. Veeam deduplicates the data before it gets to the ExaGrid system, and then the system reduces it even further after it hits the landing zone," he said.

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).

ExaGrid and Veeam can instantly recover a file or VMware virtual machine by running it directly from the ExaGrid appliance in the event that the file is lost, corrupted or encrypted or the primary storage VM becomes unavailable. This instant recovery is possible because of ExaGrid's Landing Zone – a high-speed disk cache on the ExaGrid appliance that retains the most recent backups in

their complete form. Once the primary storage environment has been brought back to a working state, the VM backed up on the ExaGrid appliance can then be migrated to primary storage for continued operation.

Superior Scalability Means No Forklift Upgrades

Scalability was another big selling feature, Jarvis said.

"We purchased the ExaGrid system with the intent to scale it as our backup data increases. With the ExaGrid, we can add more appliances to increase capacity without doing a forklift upgrade. The other thing that impressed us is that ExaGrid systems are backward compatible. Often times, companies upgrade so much internally in products that it's just not possible to keep older systems running in conjunction with newer ones. That's not the case with ExaGrid," he said.

The ExaGrid system can easily scale to accommodate data growth. ExaGrid's software makes the system highly scalable – appliances of any size or age can be mixed and matched in a single system. A single scale-out system can take in up to a 2.7PB full backup plus retention at an ingest rate of up to 488TB per hour.

ExaGrid appliances contain not just disk but also processing power, memory, and bandwidth. When the system needs to expand, additional appliances are simply added to the existing system. The system scales linearly, maintaining a fixed-length backup window as data grows so customers only pay for what they need, when they need it.

Data is deduplicated into a non-network-facing Repository Tier with automatic load balancing and global deduplication across all repositories.

Proactive Customer Support

The ExaGrid system was designed to be easy to set up and operate. ExaGrid's industry-leading level 2 senior support engineers are assigned to individual customers, ensuring they always work with the same engineer. Customers never have to repeat themselves to various support staff, and issues get resolved quickly.

"ExaGrid's user interface gives me access to all the information I need to manage the system in one central place," he said. "ExaGrid's support staff is readily available in the event that I need help. In fact, when we first set up the ExaGrid system, we purchased Veeam 7.0, and the ExaGrid team went out of their way to get everything up and running optimally."

Jarvis said that he's more confident in the company's ability to back up and restore critical client information.

"Installing the ExaGrid system has taken the worry out of our backups. We looked at a lot of different products, and we're confident that ExaGrid was the right choice for our environment – it's taken the worry out of our backups."

ExaGrid and Veeam

Veeam's backup solutions and ExaGrid's Tiered Backup Storage combine for the industry's fastest backups, fastest restores, a scale-out storage system as data grows, and a strong ransomware recovery story – all at the lowest cost.

ExaGrid-Veeam Combined Dedupe

Veeam uses changed block tracking to perform a level of data deduplication. ExaGrid allows Veeam deduplication and Veeam dedupe-friendly compression to stay on. ExaGrid will increase Veeam's deduplication by a factor of about 7:1 to a total combined deduplication ratio of 14:1, reducing the storage required and saving on storage costs up front and over time.

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**.

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