

# University System of GA SSC Better Protected Against Data Loss with ExaGrid

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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**Joshua Humphrey**  
System Administrator  
USG Shared Services Center

## Customer Overview

The University System of Georgia Shared Services Center was started in 2009 to become the central payroll and benefits processing center for the University System. Their Payroll & Benefits Department provides shared services for all 34 institutions in the University of Georgia system with 30-40 employees.

## Out With the Old, In With ExaGrid

When the SSC's backup system needed upgrading, they hired consultants to recommend the new backup system's configuration and sizing. The consultants had worked with ExaGrid in the past and, based on their past experience, recommended and sized an ExaGrid system for the SSC.

According to Joshua Humphrey, system administrator at the SSC, "We took their recommendation and haven't looked back since." The consultants also assisted with installation and setup of the new system. ExaGrid has been a part of the SSC's layered backup plan from the beginning.

## ExaGrid Chosen for Outstanding Data Deduplication Performance

"We never really looked at anything other than ExaGrid because of the deduplicating capabilities," said Humphrey. "That was a big factor of going with ExaGrid. I don't think there was anything else on the market that could compete with that."

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. 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.

## Easy Installation, Superior Customer Support

Humphrey reports that, "the installation went fine. The ExaGrid technicians were able to remotely take care of some small issues after the initial setup. Our experience with Customer Support is that they've been proactive in contacting us and making sure things are working properly by logging into the system."

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.

## ExaGrid Is an Integral Part of Disaster Recovery

Full backups of the entire user data set are sent to the ExaGrid system, then backed up to a tape library. For an extra layer of protection, tapes get sent offsite for storage periodically. Several virtual machines are backed up on the local ExaGrid system, and then backed up again on the second ExaGrid system at the disaster recovery site.

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If the SSC's main site ever becomes completely disabled, it can be easily restored using the ExaGrid system located at the remote site to get everything back up and running. The staff has performed a drill on that failure scenario in order to gain the experience of going through that crisis. Humphrey says, "If we ever have to recover from a disaster or breakdown, our biggest weapon against failure is the ExaGrid system."

## Customer Impact with ExaGrid

The entire site, including E-mail, FTP and the phone system, is backed up in three to four hours to the ExaGrid system. Data retention is four to five days but uses a fraction of the ExaGrid system's 16-week capacity. Humphrey reports that, "deduplication ratios are in some cases reaching 1000:1 for some of the individual servers and files that are being deduplicated."

"What I like about the ExaGrid system is the ease of use of it. We don't need to log into it that often because it never gives us any problems. It just happens. It just works," said Humphrey.

## 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.

The SSC uses Symantec Backup Exec agents running on all their servers and VMware vRanger for all the virtual backups. The onsite ExaGrid system sends the deduplicated files over a dedicated VPN tunnel through the University System of Georgia network to the second ExaGrid system located offsite for disaster recovery.

## Intelligent Data Protection

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

**For more information about ExaGrid, please visit us at [www.exagrid.com](http://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](http://www.exagrid.com).