WSIPC Selects ExaGrid over Data Domain for Data Deduplication and Scalability

USA

Key Benefits:

- Strong disaster recovery solution
- Strong data dedupe ratio of 48:1
- Cost-effective and scalable
- Backup times reduces from 24 hours to 6
- ExaGrid's scale-out architecture enables scalability to support future data growth

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Ray Steele
Senior Systems Engineer

Customer Overview

The Washington School Information Processing Cooperative (WSIPC) is a non-profit cooperative that provides technology solutions, services, and support to K-12 public and private schools. Membership includes 9 Educational Service Districts and more than 280 school districts, which represent nearly 730,000 students in over 1,500 schools.

Fast Growing Data Led to Long Backup Times

WSIPC had been struggling with how to best back up and store its fast-growing data for some time. The organization had been backing up to tape, but nightly backups had been taking nearly 24 hours to complete, leaving little time for restores or maintenance.

"Our data grows at a rate of nearly 50 percent a year. We were backing up to tape, but our backup windows had grown to the point where our jobs were running constantly," said Ray Steele, senior systems engineer at WSIPC. "We began looking for a new backup solution in conjunction with a datacenter consolidation project and decided to investigate disk-based backup solutions in an effort to cut our backup times and to streamline operations."

Cost-Effective ExaGrid System Delivers Powerful Data Deduplication and Scalability

After looking at several different approaches, WSIPC narrowed down the field to systems from ExaGrid and Dell EMC Data Domain.

"We looked closely at solutions from both ExaGrid and Data Domain and found that we liked ExaGrid's post-process data deduplication better than Data Domain's inline method. With ExaGrid's approach, the data is backed up to a landing zone so that the backup times are faster," Steele said. "The ExaGrid system was also more cost-effective and scalable than the Data Domain unit."

WSIPC purchased a two-site ExaGrid system and installed one system in its primary datacenter in Everett, Washington and a second in Spokane. Data is automatically replicated between the two systems each night in case it is needed for disaster recovery. The ExaGrid units work in conjunction with the organization's existing backup application, Micro Focus Data Protector.

48:1 Data Deduplication Dramatically Reduces Amount of Data Stored, Speeds Transmission Between Sites

"We've been very impressed with ExaGrid's data deduplication technology. Our data dedupe ratio is currently 48:1, which really helps to make the most of the disk space," said Steele. "The data deduplication also helps to speed the transmission time between sites because only the changed data is sent over the WAN. When we set the system up, we were prepared to increase our bandwidth to accommodate for lots of additional data, but we haven't had to do that because the ExaGrid does such a good job at deduplication."

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).

Backup Times Reduced from 24 Hours to Six Hours

Steele said that since installing the ExaGrid system, the organization's backup times have been reduced from nearly 24 hours to six hours.

"Our backup jobs run so much faster now, and they run flawlessly. We basically don't think about backups anymore," he said.

Easy Setup, Management, and Administration

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.

"We installed the ExaGrid system ourselves and it couldn't have been easier. We unpacked the unit, racked it, and called into ExaGrid support to finish the setup," said Steele. "Once the system was up and running, we really haven't had to touch it. It doesn't require any real thought once it's set up, and it's very easy to manage."

Steele said that ExaGrid's customer support is knowledgeable and proactive.

"ExaGrid's customer support team has done a wonderful job for us," he said. "They have been extremely helpful and answer our questions promptly. Also, they're very good at keeping us informed about new developments and they're proactive."

Scale-out Architecture Ensures Scalability

ExaGrid's appliance models can be mixed and matched into a single scale-out system allowing a full backup of up to 2.7PB with a combined ingest rate of 488TB/hr, in a single system. The appliances automatically join the scale-out system. Each appliance includes the appropriate amount of processor, memory, disk, and bandwidth for the data size. By adding compute with capacity, the backup window remains fixed in length as the data grows. Automatic load balancing across all repositories allows for full utilization of all appliances. Data is deduplicated into an offline repository, and additionally, data is globally deduplicated across all repositories.

"One of the main reasons we began looking for a new backup solution was to keep up with our fast-growing data. ExaGrid's scale-out architecture will enable us to easily scale up to meet our future requirements," Steele said. "With the ExaGrid system, we've been able to reduce our backup times and reliance on tape, and we're more confident in our ability to properly back up our data."

Intelligent Data Protection

ExaGrid's turnkey disk-based backup system combines enterprise drives with zone-level data deduplication, delivering a disk-based solution that is far more cost effective than simply backing up to disk with deduplication or using backup software deduplication to disk. ExaGrid's patented zone-level deduplication reduces the disk space needed by a range of 10:1 to 50:1, depending on the data types and retention periods, by storing only the unique objects across backups instead of redundant data. Adaptive Deduplication performs deduplication and replication in parallel with backups. As data is being deduplicated to the repository, it is also replicated to a second ExaGrid site or the public cloud for disaster recovery (DR).

ExaGrid and Micro Focus

Micro Focus Data Protector provides a complete, flexible, and integrated backup and recovery solution for Windows, Linux, and UNIX environments. Efficient backup requires close integration between the backup software and backup storage. That is the advantage delivered by the partnership between Micro Focus and ExaGrid. Together, Micro Focus and ExaGrid Tiered Backup Storage provide a cost-effective solution that scales to meet the needs of demanding enterprise environments.

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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