



Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES Gives ExaGrid High Grades for Fast Backups and Restores

WAYNE - FINGER LAKES

Board of Cooperative Educational Services



USA

Customer Overview

Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES (Board of Cooperative Educational Services) Makes Success Possible by providing programs and services in collaboration with 25 school districts throughout Wayne, Ontario, Seneca, Cayuga, and Yates counties. We provide educational services and instructional opportunities for learners of all ages. As an organization, we are committed to working in partnership with local stakeholders to improve the efficiencies and effectiveness of school operations, providing greater opportunities throughout the region.

Key Benefits:

- Full backup reduced from 40 hours to 8
- Seamless integration with Commvault
- Instantaneous restores
- Responsive and proactive customer support
- Expanding system is easy

"We preferred ExaGrid's approach to data deduplication over Dell EMC Data Domain's. ExaGrid's post-process data deduplication ensures that our backups run as quickly as possible because the data is deduplicated after it hits the landing zone. Our backups are incredibly fast, and they run flawlessly each and every night."

Dennis Bradley
Network Analyst

Need for Faster Backups and Restores Led to ExaGrid

Long backup times had become routine at the Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES. After dealing with weekly full backup times that stretched 40 hours or more and incremental backups that ran for six hours each night, the IT staff finally decided to look for a new solution that could speed backups and reduce reliance on tape.

"Our backup and restore times were too long and we were tired of dealing with tape," said Dennis Bradley, network analyst at Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES. "We looked at several different approaches and finally decided that disk-based backup was the only way to go."

After narrowing the field down to solutions from Dell EMC Data Domain and ExaGrid, the Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES chose ExaGrid's disk-based backup system with data deduplication. The ExaGrid system works alongside the district's existing backup application, Commvault.

"We spent a lot of time evaluating both products. In the end, we preferred ExaGrid's approach to data deduplication over Data Domain's. ExaGrid's post-process data deduplication ensures that our backups run as quickly as possible because the data is deduplicated after it hits the landing zone," said Bradley.

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).



Faster Backups and Restores

Since installing the ExaGrid system, the district's full backup times have been reduced from 40 hours to 8 hours, and nightly incremental backup times have been reduced from 6 hours to 1-1/2 hours maximum.

"Our backups are incredibly fast, and they run flawlessly each and every night," said Bradley. "Also, our restores are nearly instantaneous," Bradley said. "ExaGrid's data deduplication does a wonderful job at maximizing the amount of data we can keep on the system. It's terrific to have so much data available for restores."

Easy Installation and Responsive, Knowledgeable Customer Support

Bradley said that installing the ExaGrid system was an easy process.

"I installed the ExaGrid system myself, and it was simple and straightforward. The ExaGrid works seamlessly with Commvault, so all I had to do was rack the system and set up shares. The rest was all done within Commvault. Because Commvault sees the ExaGrid system as simply a disk with storage, we were able to send data directly to it. The ExaGrid was up in running in less than half a day."

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 customer support has simply been top-notch. Our support engineer goes above and beyond, always staying in touch, monitoring our system, and keeping us up to date on things. He also has a great deal of knowledge about the ExaGrid product and about Commvault as well. He's even helped me out with Commvault issues that had nothing to do with the ExaGrid system," said Bradley. "I would put ExaGrid's customer support at the very top of the list out of all the vendors we deal with."

Easy to Scale

ExaGrid's award-winning scale-out architecture provides customers with a fixed-length backup window regardless of data growth. Its unique disk-cache Landing Zone allows for the fastest backups and retains the most recent backup in its full undeduplicated form, enabling the fastest restores.

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.

Bradley said that when the district chose the ExaGrid system, scalability wasn't a critical part of the decision criteria, but when it came time to expand the system, the IT staff was pleased with how easy it was.

"We didn't really spend a lot of time on scalability during the evaluation process. However, once we had our first ExaGrid system we were very pleased with it so when it came time to expand the system, we didn't look anywhere else. We went straight to ExaGrid," he said.

The district initially purchased a 4TB system and then added a second 10TB unit to accommodate additional backup data.

"Expanding the system was easy. I just racked the additional unit, and it was ready to go within an hour. Our support engineer then remoted into the system and finished the configuration. It couldn't have been easier," Bradley said. "The ExaGrid is a very flexible system and we love its scalability. It's really taken the pain out of our backups."

ExaGrid and Commvault

The Commvault backup application has a level of data deduplication. ExaGrid can ingest Commvault deduplicated data and increase the level of data deduplication by 3X providing a combined deduplication ratio of 15:1, significantly reducing the amount and cost of storage up front and over time. Instead of performing data at rest encryption in Commvault ExaGrid, performs this function in the disk drives in nanoseconds. This approach provides an increase of 20% to 30% for Commvault environments while greatly reducing storage costs.

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).

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.

