

WeiserMazars Counts on ExaGrid for Faster, More Efficient Backups

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Egan Richards
Assistant Director of IT
WeiserMazars

Customer Overview

Since 1921, WeiserMazars LLP has provided accounting, tax and advisory services, and was named one of the Fastest Growing/All-Star Firms in the country by INSIDE Public Accounting in September 2011. WeiserMazars' team of over 100 partners and approximately 700 professionals is based out of six U.S. offices, Israel and the Cayman Islands. WeiserMazars is the independent U.S. member firm of the Mazars Group, an international accounting, audit, tax and advisory services organization with nearly 14,000 professionals in more than 60 countries.

IT Team Struggles with Tape, Turns to Cost-Effective ExaGrid System

Like most other organizations, WeiserMazars' data volumes are continuously increasing. The public accounting firm is federally mandated to keep data for as long as seven years but was having difficulty meeting retention goals with tape.

"We were constantly purchasing larger and larger tape drives, and were in a never-ending cycle of purchasing tape to feed our backup demands," said Egan Richards, assistant director of information technology at WeiserMazars. "We decided to search for a new, more efficient backup solution with data deduplication to reduce the amount of data we store."

Multi-Site ExaGrid System Delivers Strong Data Deduplication to Reduce Amount of Data Stored

Richards said that the firm's IT staff looked at several different backup products in addition to ExaGrid, including solutions from EMC Data Domain. After evaluating the systems, WeiserMazars decided to purchase a multi-site ExaGrid and installed units in its New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania offices. The firm uses Symantec Backup Exec as its backup

application to back up data from both physical and virtual servers. Data from the systems is cross-replicated for disaster recovery purposes.

"The ExaGrid system was more cost effective than the EMC Data Domain unit, and we liked its data deduplication capabilities. Data deduplication was important to us from a space-saving and time-saving perspective; it helps us to easily meet our retention goals in as little disk space as possible," said Richards. "One of our concerns with tape was the length of our backup times – they were way too long. ExaGrid's data deduplication ensures that our backups run as quickly as possible because it's performed after the backup hits the landing zone."

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.

EXAGRID™

Faster Backups, Reduced Administration

Prior to installing the ExaGrid system, WeiserMazars' backups were running as long as 14 hours per night in its New York City office. Now, that same backup job runs just a couple of hours. In other satellite offices, backups that were running four hours have been reduced to just an hour.

"Our backup jobs are faster and run more consistently and reliably than they did with tape," Richards said. "It also takes far less staff time to manage the system. Other than just checking to make sure things are running smoothly, there's not much to do on a daily basis. The reduced administration time, coupled with the fact that we've been able to eliminate tape and tape drive purchases from our budget, makes for a fantastic ROI."

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.

"The ExaGrid system is easy to use, and it really takes user error out of the equation, especially compared to tape. With tape, there were times when the person responsible for backup would forget to change the tape or the vault would go bad. We were also constantly servicing the units," he said. "Those factors are no longer in the equation because there are no more vaults being used, and there's virtually no user intervention required. Our backups run smoothly and successfully each and every night."

Installing the ExaGrid system was simple and straightforward, Richards said. "Setting up the ExaGrid system was a breeze. We followed some simple instructions, and then our ExaGrid support engineer took over and did most of the configuration work for us," he said. "Our support engineer is fantastic. He's easy to get in touch with by phone or email, and he's very knowledgeable about the product. We've been very happy with support."

GRID Architecture Ensures Scalability

"One of the things we like about the ExaGrid system is its scalability. We have some mergers on the horizon, so we don't have a firm grasp on our long-range data growth. The fact that we can easily expand the system made us much more comfortable about the purchase," Richards said.

ExaGrid's GRID computing software makes the system highly scalable, and when plugged into a switch, different sized configurations can be mixed and matched into a single GRID

system with capacities of up to a 130TB full backup plus retention. Once virtualized, they appear as a single system to the backup server, and load balancing of all data across servers is automatic.

"Having a solid backup solution in place has taken a load off my mind. I don't have to worry about day-to-day file recoveries, disaster recovery, tape rotation, or lost or corrupt tapes," said Richards. "We also have plenty of room on the system for retention, and we can easily expand it to meet future requirements without a forklift upgrade."

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.

Organizations using Symantec Backup Exec can look to ExaGrid as an alternative to tape for nightly backups. ExaGrid sits behind existing backup applications, such as Symantec Backup Exec, providing faster and more reliable backups and restores. In a network running Symantec Backup Exec, using ExaGrid in place of a tape backup system is as easy as pointing existing backup jobs at a NAS share on the ExaGrid system. Backup jobs are sent directly from the backup application to the ExaGrid for onsite backup to disk

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.

The ExaGrid system is easy to install and use and works seamlessly with popular backup applications, so organizations can retain their investment in existing applications and processes. ExaGrid servers can be used at primary and secondary sites to supplement or eliminate offsite tapes with live data repositories for disaster recovery.

For more information about ExaGrid, please visit us at www.exagrid.com or call us at 1-800-868-6985.