

Westmoreland County Reduces Backup and Restore Times, Reduces Reliance on Tape with ExaGrid

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Jason Lehman
Systems Administrator
Westmoreland County

Customer Overview

Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania is located in Southwestern Pennsylvania, and has a population of 369,993.

Long and Unreliable Backups to Tape Strain IT Department

Westmoreland County's IT staff had been backing up the County's data to tape but had become frustrated with long backup times, unreliable backups and daily tape management.

“It had become difficult to get good backups every day with tape,” said Jason Lehman, systems administrator for Westmoreland County. “Our backup times were long and we spent lots of time troubleshooting our tape drives and backup jobs. Also, restoring data from tape was a headache. We're a very busy department and dealing with tape was extremely time consuming.”

ExaGrid's Post Process Data De-duplication Speeds Backups and Restores, Maximizes Disk Space

Westmoreland County's IT staff began to look for a solution that could reduce its day-to-day reliance on tape. After looking at several products on the market, the County purchased a disk-based backup system from ExaGrid.

“We looked at several different approaches to disk-based backup and we really were impressed with the ExaGrid system. We liked ExaGrid's post-process data de-duplication and felt that it would provide faster backups than some of the other products with in-line data de-duplication,” said Lehman.

ExaGrid combines last backup compression along with data de-duplication, 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 de-duplication 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 byte-level data de-duplication technology moves only changes, requiring minimal WAN bandwidth.

“We've been extremely happy with ExaGrid's data de-duplication ratios and our backups are now completed well within our backup windows,” said Lehman. “Restoring data is now a painless process. With tape, we had to search through our fireproof safe for the right tape, load it into the library, inventory it and search the tape for the data. All in all, the process often took hours. With the ExaGrid system, our restores requests are completed in minutes. It really saves us a considerable amount of time.”

Since installing the ExaGrid system, Westmoreland County has been able to reduce the length of its backups each weekend from 40 hours to 26 hours. Nightly incremental backups have been reduced from eight hours to four hours.

“The beauty of the ExaGrid is that we can write multiple jobs at the same time to the system. With tape, we could only write one job at a time. It has enabled us to cut our backup window by nearly 50 percent,” said Lehman. “The ExaGrid saves us a tremendous amount of time each day because we no longer have to manage or administer tapes or troubleshoot our backups. Our staff time is valuable and the ExaGrid system has made us more productive.”



Cost Effective to Acquire, Works with Existing Backup Applications and Tape Library

The ExaGrid system was installed in the County's datacenter and works along with its existing backup application, Symantec's Backup Exec™. The ExaGrid system is copied to tape in case the data is needed for disaster recovery purposes and the tapes are kept in a secure location.

"The ExaGrid system was cost effective to acquire and we were able to keep our investment in both Backup Exec and our tape library," said Lehman.

"In the future, we may add a second ExaGrid system for data replication to eliminate tape altogether. It was a big advantage for us to be able to use the first system as a proof of concept before going to a two-site system."

Easy to Install and Manage, Industry Leading Customer Support

The ExaGrid system was designed to be easy to install and manage, with an intuitive interface designed for fast setup and straightforward integration with existing backup applications.

"Setting up the ExaGrid was simple and took no time at all, and we've found it extremely easy to use. If you can set up a simple network share, you can use the ExaGrid," said Lehman.

ExaGrid's industry-leading customer support team is staffed by trained, in-house engineers who are dedicated to individual accounts. The ExaGrid system is fully supported and was designed and manufactured for maximum uptime with redundant, hot-swappable components.

"The level of support we have received has been phenomenal. We were extremely impressed that we were assigned to a specific engineer who is familiar with our installation. Our support engineer has been proactive, knowledgeable and easy to reach. It's simply been one of the best support experiences I've ever had," said Lehman. "We've been very pleased with the ExaGrid. It is extremely easy to use, it's enabled us to cut our backup times by 50 percent, and its fast restore times let us be more responsive to our users."

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.

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 byte-level data de-duplication, delivering a disk-based solution that is more cost effective than standard SATA drives. ExaGrid's byte-level data de-duplication 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.