



Williamson Medical Replaces Dell EMC Data Domain with ExaGrid for Speed and Reliability



USA

Key Benefits:

- ExaGrid support engineer is 'extension' of IT team
- Now spends just 3-5% of time managing backups
- Success rate of ExaGrid and Veeam restores is 100%
- Enjoys 'set and forget' reliability

"When I had to do a restore of an 8GB database that was compressed down in the Dell EMC Data Domain system, it took approximately 12 to 13 hours to complete – and took our SharePoint site offline for almost a full day. We consistently had these types of issues."

Sam Marsh
Engineering Team Lead

Customer Overview

Based in Tennessee, Williamson Medical Center is a sophisticated regional medical center that offers an array of specialized services with the ability to treat and heal the most complex medical conditions. Their medical providers consist of more than 825 highly skilled board-certified physicians who bring a wealth of knowledge, experience, and expertise to our region, supported by a staff of 2,000 employees.

Slow Backups Lead to Tape Replacement

Williamson Medical Center has over 400 virtual machines (VMs) that need to be backed up daily. Originally, they planned to use a disk-to-disk-to-tape approach using Dell EMC Data Domain with Veeam as their backup application, but that strategy just wasn't fast enough, and backups jobs weren't completing. Williamson Medical looked at their options and ExaGrid had the results they were looking for.

"I've had previous experience with different backup solutions and VMware," said Sam Marsh, engineering team lead for Williamson Medical. "When I started working for Williamson Medical Center, I realized that their backups weren't sufficient for the environment, so I took a look at different solutions to find out what we could implement that would give us the speed we needed to successfully back up all the different data we have."

Marsh decided to do a proof of concept with ExaGrid and brought a few appliances in-house. "We were able to configure the ExaGrid systems quickly and got up and running. We tested it and found the speed running two 10GbE NICs out of the ExaGrid was wonderful for what we needed. In addition, the ease of deployment and reliability of the system has been stellar. We have quite a few disk storage systems around here, and as long as we've owned the ExaGrid, we've never replaced a disk. So, kudos to ExaGrid on great hardware," he said.

Williamson Medical had been doing other backups using Dell EMC Data Domain but experienced some significant drawbacks. "One of the negatives about the Dell EMC Data Domain solution is one of the things that pushed me towards ExaGrid. Data Domain is very good at deduplication but not at fast restores. When I had to do a restore of an 8GB database that was compressed down in



the Data Domain system, it took approximately 12 to 13 hours to complete – and took our SharePoint site offline for almost a full day. We consistently had these types of issues," said Marsh.

ExaGrid's Architecture Proves Powerful with Veeam

"One of the things that intrigued me about ExaGrid was its unique landing zone and the ability to have disk speed, memory, and processor in each appliance. We've had 100% success rate in restores from the ExaGrid since we've owned it. It's saved us quite a few times," said Marsh.

Prior to ExaGrid, Marsh had been dealing with considerable length backup windows that were getting longer by the month, so the speed of the ExaGrid backups made a remarkable difference. "The footprint is fixed and the backup window doesn't grow. That's the nice part with ExaGrid; as our data grows, we can keep things consistent," he said.

"Through our transition to becoming 95% virtualized, we switched to Veeam. Along with writing directly to disk using ExaGrid, the combination of ExaGrid and Veeam has really simplified backup and increased our ability to do what counts, which are the restores."

Ease of Management Saves IT Team's Valuable Time

Williamson Medical has one environment with 400+ virtual servers, along with another VMware environment which has approximately 60 servers and three dozen physical servers. They also had several other disparate systems. This was a project, but one that has long-term effect, scale, and cost savings. Williamson now has a two-site solution that provides everything they need.

ExaGrid provides Marsh's small IT team with good balance, manageability, and functionality. "ExaGrid has given us the ability to install the hardware and actually be able to rely on that equipment to work flawlessly. That is unique," he said.

Marsh appreciates the reliability that the ExaGrid system provides. "It's nice to be able to implement something and be confident that it's going to work – and work correctly. ExaGrid is something I can actually count on, and it saves me a lot of time. Most of the systems I install need at least 30% of my time to manage the system, but with ExaGrid, it's closer to 3-5% and I can use that time savings on other efforts. Other than making a specific change, I rarely look at reporting, and daily management is next to nothing. ExaGrid is a 'set and forget' backup storage solution."



Support is Out of This World

"With ExaGrid, we have one assigned support engineer who has worked with us throughout the entirety of our project. Our support engineer is an extension of our own IT staff. It's nice to know customer support on a first-name basis as well as be able to count on them to be experts at what they're working on. I've noticed that the engineering staff we deal with doesn't have the turnover like other vendors – it seems like a very stable team and company," said Marsh.

Williamson Medical is currently installing its disaster recovery and is looking forward to the built-in syncing ExaGrid provides as part of the product. "Many other backup systems actually charge for additional licensing, or it may be a whole additional product you have to install just to get the syncing to work. The fact that it's integrated with ExaGrid is a key part of the entire solution. ExaGrid is a homerun for us, and it makes each day less stressful," said Marsh.

Unique Architecture & Scalability

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 unduplicated 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.

This combination of capabilities in a turnkey appliance makes the ExaGrid system easy to install, manage, and scale. ExaGrid's architecture provides lifetime value and investment protection that no other architecture can match.

ExaGrid and Veeam

Veeam's backup solutions and ExaGrid's Tiered Backup Storage combine for the industry's fastest backups, fastest restores, a scale-out storage system as data grows, and a strong ransomware recovery story – all at the lowest cost.

ExaGrid-Veeam Combined Dedupe

Veeam uses changed block tracking to perform a level of data deduplication. ExaGrid allows Veeam deduplication and Veeam dedupe-friendly compression to stay on. ExaGrid will increase Veeam's deduplication by a factor of about 7:1 to a total combined deduplication ratio of 14:1, reducing the storage required and saving on storage costs up front and over time.

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.