



YWCA Broadens Data Protection by Expanding Backups with ExaGrid-Veeam Solution

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Seattle | King | Snohomish



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Key Benefits:

- ExaGrid supports replication to AWS cloud storage for DR
- ExaGrid provides YWCA with 'consistent backup performance' and fixed backup windows despite increased backup jobs
- ExaGrid-Veeam deduplication maximizes storage, allows YWCA to back up entire environment
- Reliable backups and easy restores give YWCA's IT staff confidence that data is protected

"As a nonprofit, we often have to make do with what we have, so in the past we had to prioritize backing up our critical servers due to space constraints. Now that we've added ExaGrid to our environment, deduplication has maximized our storage capacity, and we're able to back up almost all of our servers, beyond just the critical ones."

Oliver Hansen
IT Director

Customer Overview

Established in 1894, YWCA Seattle | King | Snohomish is the oldest nonprofit in the region focused on the needs of women and girls, and is the second largest YWCA association in the United States. With more than 20 locations across two counties, each one of YWCA's facilities reflects the growing needs and changing demographics in the region, offering culturally appropriate employment, counseling, family services, and more.

ExaGrid-Veeam Solution Chosen to Replace NAS

The IT staff at YWCA Seattle | King | Snohomish were backing up the organization's data to a Drobo NAS device with Microsoft Windows' built-in backup applications. The IT staff wanted to add data deduplication to the backup environment, so the organization's reseller presented a few options including Dell EMC solutions, as well as Veeam and ExaGrid. "We were looking at software and storage at the same time," said Oliver Hansen, the YWCA's IT director. "ExaGrid and Veeam provided all of the features that we were looking for, and both products offered better pricing compared to the Dell EMC solutions we'd looked at early on."

The combination of ExaGrid's and Veeam's industry-leading virtual server data protection solutions allows customers to utilize Veeam Backup & Replication in VMware, vSphere, and Microsoft Hyper-V virtual environments on ExaGrid's disk-based backup system. This combination provides fast backups and efficient data storage as well as replication to an offsite location for DR.

ExaGrid fully leverages Veeam's built-in backup-to-disk capabilities, and ExaGrid's adaptive data deduplication provides additional data and cost reduction over standard disk solutions. Customers can use Veeam Backup & Replication's built-in source-side deduplication in concert with ExaGrid's disk-based backup system with adaptive deduplication to further shrink backups.

Virtualizing Backup Environment with ExaGrid and Veeam

The YWCA installed an ExaGrid system at its primary site, which has recently been set up to replicate to Amazon Web Services (AWS) cloud storage. The ExaGrid Cloud Tier allows customers to replicate deduplicated backup data from a physical onsite ExaGrid appliance to the cloud



tier in Amazon Web Services (AWS) or Microsoft Azure for an offsite disaster recovery (DR) copy. The ExaGrid Cloud Tier is a software version (VM) of ExaGrid that runs in AWS or Azure. The ExaGrid Cloud Tier looks and acts exactly like a second-site ExaGrid appliance. Data is deduplicated in the onsite ExaGrid appliance and replicated to the cloud tier as if it was a physical offsite system. All features apply such as encryption in transit from the primary site to the cloud tier in AWS or Azure, bandwidth throttle between the primary site ExaGrid appliance and the cloud tier in AWS, replication reporting, DR testing, and all other features found in a physical second-site ExaGrid DR appliance.

Hansen backs up the nonprofit's data in daily incrementals, along with a weekly synthetic full. "We have a mix of physical and virtual servers and we're able to back up the physical servers and then restore them to virtual using Veeam and ExaGrid. That's helped us to move the virtualization process along."

He has been impressed with the speed and reliability of backups to the ExaGrid system. "Backing up data to our ExaGrid is definitely faster than to the NAS we'd used. We back up much more data now, but the backup window is nearly the same. We weren't able to coordinate our

backup schedule with the NAS, so sometimes multiple backup jobs would run at the same time, which slowed everything down. ExaGrid offers consistent backup performance, and now our backups run as scheduled.”

In addition to providing reliable backups, the ExaGrid-Veeam solution has made it easier to restore data, when necessary. “Whenever I’ve had to restore a file, or even a VM, it’s been a simple, straightforward process. We weren’t always sure what to expect when restoring data from our previous solution, as sometimes it would take a few hours to mount an old backup, or worse yet, sometimes the backups were corrupt. Now that we have ExaGrid and Veeam in place, I’m confident that we can fulfill restore requests,” said Hansen.

ExaGrid and Veeam can instantly recover a file or VMware virtual machine by running it directly from the ExaGrid appliance in the event that the file is lost, corrupted or encrypted or the primary storage VM becomes unavailable. This instant recovery is possible because of ExaGrid’s Landing Zone – a high-speed disk cache on the ExaGrid appliance that retains the most recent backups in their complete form. Once the primary storage environment has been brought back to a working state, the VM backed up on the ExaGrid appliance can then be migrated to primary storage for continued operation.



Adding Dedupe Allows YWCA to Broaden Data Protection

One of the major considerations the YWCA had for choosing a new backup solution was adding data deduplication to its backup environment. “Adding deduplication has made quite an impact on our backups. As a nonprofit, we often have to make do with what we have, so in the past we had to prioritize backing up our critical servers due to space constraints. Now that we’ve added ExaGrid to our environment, deduplication has maximized our storage capacity, and we’re able to back almost all of our servers, beyond just the critical ones. In addition, we are able to keep the same retention period, despite backing up much more data than ever before,” said Hansen.

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.

‘Less Worry, More Confidence’ in Backups and Restores

Hansen likes ExaGrid’s approach to the support it provides to its customers. “I’ve had a great experience working with ExaGrid customer support. I really appreciate having a single point of contact; it’s so nice to speak with the same person each time, who knows our system and understands how our environment is set up. My customer support engineer is very responsive and able to remote in to look at our system whenever we have an issue. He also takes the time to explain what’s going on in the background that is causing an issue and the steps we can take to resolve it. Recently, he helped us set up the virtual ExaGrid appliance in AWS. It took some work on our end, but it was great not to have to do it by ourselves.

“Since switching to ExaGrid, I’ve had less worry and more confidence in our backups and restores. It’s a very reliable system, so once you set it up, it just runs,” said Hansen.

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. Customer’s never have to repeat themselves to various support staff, and issues get resolved quickly.

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.