

American National Bank Saves with the ExaGrid System

Customer Overview

Established in 1909, American National Bank and Trust Company provides community banking services in the south central Virginia area. Over the past 97 years, the bank has grown from a single office on Main Street in Danville to a network of 18 branch locations, 1 loan production office, and 23 Automated Teller Machines in 13 different market areas.

Tape Backups Problematic and Time Consuming

The IT department at American National Bank and Trust Company had always backed up the bank's corporate data to tape, but was frustrated by tape's inherent lack of reliability and the fact that the bank's nightly backup window had grown to 12 hours. "Our backups would start at 6:00 p.m. and continue through the night. With tape, we had jobs failing constantly due to mechanical issues," said Michael Bailess, network administrator at American National Bank and Trust. "When we needed to restore data, we'd often have to retrieve a tape from our offsite facility, bring it back, and restore it. It would take an enormous amount of time and, the tape would often be corrupt. It was a constant hassle for us."

American National Bank and Trust Company backs up approximately 500 GB of data each week from 40 Windows-based servers, and was using as many as 35 tapes over a two week period. Data from all bank branches was backed up to tape, and the tapes were kept in a library at the bank's data center. Tapes from the main datacenter were sent to an offsite location and then transported by runners who took the tapes between branches and the main datacenter each day.

Eliminating tape and reducing the 12-hour backup window were the two driving forces behind the decision to seek alternative solutions to tape. Also, looming concerns over increased requirements for auditing, compliance and security prompted the IT staff to "get ahead of the curve" and look for a solution that provided improved security and faster and more reliable restores and backups.

Banking on a Turnkey Solution

Bailess and the IT staff at American National Bank and Trust Company looked at several different types of solutions, including virtual tape library (VTL) systems, disk repository systems without data compression, and straight

SATA. Ultimately, they decided that ExaGrid's disk-based backup solution with advanced byte-level delta data reduction technology provided the most cost-effective, turnkey solution with the features that best met their needs.

"Cost was an important factor for us. We looked at VTL systems and found them cost-prohibitive. Also, we considered adding straight disk to our SAN, but it would have been expensive and more complex because we would have had to configure and manage it on our own," said Bailess.

Disk repository systems were also evaluated, but because they didn't offer data compression, they proved to be expensive as well. "Instead of needing a one to two terabyte system, we would have needed a five or six terabyte system, which sent the price through the roof," Bailess said. "The way ExaGrid handles data reduction meant that we are able to purchase a much smaller system than we would have with other types of products."

"ExaGrid's pricing structure, combined with the ability to put so much data on a smaller system made it much more feasible than other solutions," said Bailess. "Now, we're planning on putting in a second site system to act as a live disk repository to completely eliminate tape."

ExaGrid Reduces Backup Window and Disk Space

After installing ExaGrid, American National Bank and Trust Company's backups have run smoothly, and its backup window has been cut in half, from 12 hours to six.

"Now, we can run multiple backups to the ExaGrid and the process never slows down. We're not waiting for a tape drive to free up for the next job to run," said Bailess. "Also,

"ExaGrid's cost benefits, combined with the ability to put so much data on a smaller system made it much more feasible than other solutions. Our backup window has also been cut in half."

– Michael Bailess
Network Administrator



restores are much faster and we don't have to worry about corrupted tapes. Before, the time it took us to restore data was a huge issue. Now, on-the-fly backups are no problem and the data is readily available."

Because of ExaGrid's unique approach to data reduction, American National Bank and Trust Company has seen the amount of backup data stored significantly reduced even though its data retention periods have remained consistent. ExaGrid combines standard data compression for the most recent backups, along with byte-level delta data reduction for all previous backups. ExaGrid's byte-level delta data reduction technology stores changes from backup to backup instead of storing full file copies. This allows long-term backup history to be cost-effectively stored on disk.

"We've been very impressed with ExaGrid's compression technology," said Bailless. "The data reduction rate has been great. ExaGrid is designed for backup, and it does everything in the background so we don't have to think about it."

Simple Setup, Seamless Integration with Symantec Backup Exec

Another absolute requirement for American National Bank and Trust Company was the ability to work seamlessly with its existing backup solution, Symantec Backup Exec. "Setting up the ExaGrid was really simple. There were only a few steps – even a beginner could set it up," said Bailless. "All we had to do was set up a file share on the ExaGrid, and then point Backup Exec to it. ExaGrid takes care of everything else. We never have to touch it."

"Looking ahead, we'd like to put a second site system into place so all of our data will be protected in near real time," said Bailless. We trust ExaGrid's disk-based backup completely, and are looking forward to getting rid of tape for our off-site backups. The ExaGrid system gives us peace of mind."

Intelligent, Cost-Effective Data Protection

ExaGrid is a cost-effective and scalable disk-based backup system that combines high quality SATA drives, compression, and data reduction for fast and reliable backups and restores. ExaGrid's innovative approach minimizes the amount of data to be stored by providing standard compression for the most recent backups, along with byte-level delta data reduction for all previous backups. Byte-level delta data reduction technology stores only the changes from backup to backup instead of storing full file copies, reducing the amount of disk space needed to at least 20 to 1, and resulting in a solution that is 30% the cost of standard SATA drives.

ExaGrid is easy to install and use, and works seamlessly with popular backup applications, enabling organizations to retain their investment in existing applications. ExaGrid can be used at a primary site and at a second site to supplement or eliminate offsite tapes with a live data repository or for disaster recovery. When a second site is used, the cost savings are even greater because ExaGrid's byte-level delta technology moves only changes, requiring minimal WAN bandwidth.

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.

ABOUT EXAGRID

ExaGrid is the leader in cost-effective disk-based backup solutions. A scalable system that works with existing backup applications, ExaGrid is ideal for mid-market and small enterprise companies looking to quickly eliminate the hassles of tape backup while reducing their existing backup windows. ExaGrid's innovative approach minimizes the amount of data to be stored by providing standard data compression for the most recent backups along with byte-level data reduction technology for all previous backups. Customers can deploy ExaGrid at a primary site and at a second site to supplement or eliminate offsite tapes with a live data repository or for disaster recovery.

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