



Switch to ExaGrid Simplifies Backups and Increases Data Protection for NHS Trust



The Royal Wolverhampton
NHS Trust



UNITED KINGDOM

Key Benefits:

- PrimeSys advises using ExaGrid-Veeam solution for a secure solution with ransomware recovery
- Switch to ExaGrid leads to "huge improvement" in backup performance
- Storage savings from ExaGrid-Veeam dedupe allows The Trust to increase onsite retention
- ExaGrid Customer Support helpful in optimizing ExaGrid-Veeam integration to get the "most benefits of out the solution"

"At PrimeSys, we put the customer experience at the heart of everything we do. This means the solutions we provide have to deliver, in terms of the technology but also its installation, integration with existing systems, and ongoing support. ExaGrid provides industry-leading storage efficiency, performance and security but it's the level of post-sales customer service and support that really sets them apart."

Ian Curry

Director at PrimeSys Ltd.



Customer Overview

The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust is one of the largest acute and community providers in the West Midlands having more than 800 beds on the New Cross site including intensive care beds and neonatal intensive care cots. It also has 56 rehabilitation beds at West Park Hospital and 54 beds at Cannock Chase Hospital. As the largest employer in Wolverhampton, the Trust employs more than 8,000 staff.

Too Many Backup Methods Complicate Process

The IT team at Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust had been using a variety of backup solutions which required a large amount of staff time just to manage, using Quest NetVault and Veritas Backup Exec to back up physical servers and Veeam to backup VMs, to a mixture of storage such as disk arrays and dedupe appliances, with data then copied to LTO tape.

In addition, the team found it challenging to get all of the backup jobs done and copied to tape within the backup window they had available. "Our weekly full backups were starting to take more than a week to complete, and we didn't want to leave ourselves exposed by not having our backups available to restore from," said John Lau, server engineer at the Trust.

"We found that copying from disk to tape was quite slow using the solutions we had in place, so we decided we needed to look for a better solution that allowed us to copy to tape very quickly," added Mark Parsons, the Trust's infrastructure manager.

PrimeSys Delivers a Simpler, Cost-Effective, and Secure Solution

The Trust's IT team decided to look for a backup solution that would simplify their backup environment and looked to their trusted IT consultants at PrimeSys to advise them, who suggested the Trust look into ExaGrid Tiered Backup Storage.

"PrimeSys is a specialist in data protection and recovery, and we've been working in the backup industry for over 20 years," said Ian Curry, director at PrimeSys Ltd. "ExaGrid's architecture with its high-performance Landing Zone and very efficient long-term data repository is quite unique in the market. We knew it was going to be a good solution to fix the immediate issues, but also it would give the Trust a cost-effective way to scale and expand going forward, as well.

"We've seen a lot of take-up in public sector with ExaGrid, with its modular approach that allows customers like the Trust to scale in a way that



allows for a good return on investment from the asset. Traditionally in backup storage you buy a system, then after three to five years later it reaches its end of life, so you have to keep redesigning and replacing every three to five years. We know ExaGrid provides a long-term solution, because new appliances can be added alongside existing ExaGrid systems as time goes on, with a non-obsolescence policy that means that customers are getting five to seven or even more years of utilization," said Curry.

In addition to improved backup and restore performance, ExaGrid's comprehensive security and ransomware recovery features were another reason that PrimeSys suggested that the Trust look into ExaGrid."

At PrimeSys, we're very aware that our customers in the NHS are concerned about and security and ransomware impacting backups. We wanted to present a solution we could be confident would secure the backups of the Trust. ExaGrid has a great range of features to secure the system, including role-based administration, multifactor authentication, encryption of data at rest and in transit, and the Retention Time-Lock (RTL) feature which makes backups immutable so they can't be altered and so they can't be affected by ransomware. That was another key reason we suggested ExaGrid," said Curry.

ExaGrid appliances have a network-facing, disk-cache Landing Zone where the most recent backups are stored in an unduplicated format for fast backup and restore performance.

Data is deduplicated into a non-network-facing tier called the Repository Tier, where recent and retention deduplicated data is stored for longer-term retention. The combination of a non-network facing tier (tiered air gap) plus delayed deletes and immutable data objects guards against the backup data being deleted or encrypted. ExaGrid's offline tier is ready for recovery in the event of an attack.

ExaGrid Support Key to Partners and Customers

The Trust's IT team decided to do a pilot test to see how ExaGrid would work in their backup environment and the team was impressed with the results. Now, the Trust uses just one backup method, the combined solution of ExaGrid and Veeam, which has simplified backup management and resolved backup window issues.

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.

From the initial pilot to everyday questions, the Trust's IT team finds it easy to work with their assigned ExaGrid customer support engineer. "During the pilot test, our ExaGrid support engineer was very helpful with installation and configuring our ExaGrid system with Veeam and setting up ExaGrid's RTL feature, and that made the whole process seamless," said Parsons. "Now, whenever we have question or an issue, we can reach out directly to our support engineer."

Lau has been impressed that their ExaGrid support engineer provides expertise on the entire backup environment, especially with its integration with Veeam. "Our ExaGrid support engineer guided me through Veeam settings that offer the most benefits with ExaGrid to get the most out of the solution, which was great," he said. "Working with ExaGrid has all been very positive. If I notice any alerts on our ExaGrid system, I can simply email our support engineer and he often replies to me within a few minutes.

"At PrimeSys, we put the customer experience at the heart of everything we do. This means the solutions we provide have to deliver, in terms of the technology but also its installation, integration with existing systems, and ongoing support. This is particularly important in healthcare where lives are literally at stake. ExaGrid provides industry-leading storage efficiency, performance and security but it's the level of post-sales customer service and support that really sets them apart. Working with ExaGrid, we can be confident that our solutions will deliver and our customers will receive the highest standards of service and support, through the life of the solution," said Curry.

Switch to ExaGrid Improves Retention and Performance

The Trust has a large amount of data to back up, and Lau backs up 485TB of data in daily incrementals and a weekly full backup that also gets written to tape and stored offsite for added data protection. Since switching to ExaGrid, the IT team has been able to extend the onsite retention to 30 days enabling fast restores if necessary, which was not possible with the past storage solutions.

"We noticed a huge improvement in our backup performance since switching to ExaGrid," said Lau. "Even though we have added more data to back up, our backups still fit within the desired window, and making copies to tape is quicker, too."

Parsons has also been impressed with the restore performance. "One of the less-experienced members of our IT team had restore an enormous VM recently, and the restore was quite quick considering the size, and it was a very straightforward process so he was able to manage doing the restore on his own just fine" he said.

ExaGrid writes backups directly to a disk-cache Landing Zone, avoiding inline processing and ensuring the highest possible backup performance, which results in the shortest backup window. Adaptive Deduplication performs deduplication and replication in parallel with backups for a strong recovery point (RPO). As data is being deduplicated to the repository, it can also be replicated to a second ExaGrid site or the public cloud for disaster recovery (DR).

About PrimeSys Ltd.

PrimeSys is an independent supplier of IT Solutions & Services, working across four key solution areas of Data Protection & Recovery, IT Security, Infrastructure and Connectivity. With 40 years of combined industry experience, PrimeSys' management team carefully selects industry leading partners and technologies, which combine the best of on-site systems, cloud and managed services. PrimeSys is trusted IT partner to clients around the UK, providing reliable solutions and services, tailored to individual needs. The company has supplied solutions and services to clients in Education, NHS and Local Government, as well as Finance, Legal, Energy, Retail, Manufacturing and Charity, from small firms to national household brands. As an approved sub-contractor to national procurement frameworks, PrimeSys provide a fast, simple and secure procurement route for public sector organisations.

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.

