

Clunk Click called in to improve Retention and Backup Speeds at NHS Trust

Llandudno, 29th August 2008

The IT staff at a leading NHS trust had backed up their data to tape for years and had turned to disk-to disk (D2D) backup in hopes of improving their backup window and restore speed. However, the medical facility quickly learned that although D2D was faster, it could barely keep two weeks of data on disk before reaching its capacity.

'We like to have easy access to 30 days worth of backup data in case a user notices a problem and needs a file restored,' said Andy Stott, IT systems manager, at the trust. *'Backing up to disk was a vast improvement over tape, but didn't offer the retention we needed to serve our users and we were still running over our 12 hour backup window'*

The facility called in Clunk Click to help find a suitable solution for their issues.

'Initially we looked at expanding their D2D capabilities but with further consultation we recommended an ExaGrid disk-based backup system. This was particularly suitable due to its ease of use and fast backup and restore speeds. It is now working in conjunction with the trust's existing backup application.' Said Alasdair Hill, UK Sales Manager of Clunk Click.

Clunk Click reports that since installing the system, the trust has been able to significantly improve backup times on each of the 15 Windows-based servers it protects. For example, backup times for one server have been reduced from 17 hours using D2D to less than 12 hours using ExaGrid and restores are nearly instantaneous.

'Clunk Click's solution has more than delivered in terms of backup and restore speeds,' said Stott. *'Our backup speeds have improved tremendously and we can now keep four weeks of data on the system, so data is always available if we need to restore files.'*

The System Improves Data Security

The trust uses the Clunk Click system to handle full backups of its data each night at the data centre which has enhanced security because the backup data is stored away from live data and off the network.

'We handle sensitive data and we are always mindful of data security,' said Stott. *'Using the ExaGrid system to handle our backups has improved our data security. Once the files are on the ExaGrid, they're locked into the system and the only access to it is via our backup server. With a network attached storage box, there's the Possibility that the data can be hacked. With tape backups, tapes can be lost or stolen. ExaGrid gives us a higher degree of confidence in our data security.'*

The system's data de-duplication 15:1 data reduction, GRID architecture offers easy scalability

ExaGrid's data de-duplication has been delivering 15:1 data reduction, enabling the Trust to meet its retention goals and to save money on infrastructure costs.

'We've been amazed at the data reduction capabilities and are now able to easily keep a month of data on our system,' said Stott.

Alasdair Hill commented *'We were aware that with rising electricity costs the facility needed a system that would also be economical to run. We therefore recommended that they purchase a smaller system which could reduce data and had lower power requirements and rack space to save money in the long run. The ExaGrid system combines last backup compression along with data de-duplication, which stores changes from backup to backup instead of storing full file copies.'*

This approach reduces the disk space required by a range of 10:1 to 50:1 or more, delivering unparalleled cost savings and performance. Clunk Click was confident that this system would deliver 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.

Improved Data Security

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Andy Stott, IT Systems Manager

Clunk Click reported that the trust also required their backup system to have flexibility and scalability feature in choosing to backup data from its 1,000 users. The trust now backs up business and clinical data, including its dental system, theatres management and gastroenterology imaging system to the ExaGrid. The data de-duplication technology is extremely efficient when used at multiple sites because it moves only the byte-level changes, or only 1/50th the data, across the WAN.

'With the ExaGrid system, we are able to meet our backup needs today and into the future. As we begin to backup more systems, we can deploy the systems across a WAN in multiple sites at a reasonable cost and we can easily add additional systems easily to accommodate new backup requirements,' said Stott.



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ExaGrid's GRID architecture provides easy scalability, so the system can grow as the Trust's backup requirements grow. When plugged into a switch, additional ExaGrid systems virtualise into one another, appearing as a single system to the backup server, and load balancing of all data across servers is automatic.

Resilient Hardware, Auto Notification, Superior Customer Support

ExaGrid is easy to install and use, with a hardware platform that features redundant and hot-swappable components along with advanced software with automatic notification features and outstanding customer support.

'We had the system up and running in 30 minutes and were ready for backups that night,' said Stott. 'The system works seamlessly with Backup Exec and didn't have to change any of our backup processes. Also, their customer support is extremely responsive and knowledgeable. We've been extremely pleased with Clunk Click for their high level of support and the system as a whole has greatly improved our backup capabilities and streamlined our operations.'

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 space 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. ExaGrid is easy to install and use and works seamlessly with popular backup applications, so organizations can 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 data deduplication technology moves only changes, requiring minimal WAN bandwidth.

About Clunk Click

Clunk Click data storage division works with organisations to explore and define the best solution for their specific IT needs. Our aim is to source best of breed data storage technologies to match your organisation's specific requirements rather than simply matching our product portfolio to your needs, creating strategic solutions tailored to meet your current and future storage requirements.

Clunk Click helps organisations to alleviate data and server sprawl and illustrates new solutions such as archiving issues.

We partner with the world's leading storage software and hardware providers to offer high-performance, resilient, cost-effective storage solutions. Our suppliers include Hitachi, EMC, Riverbed, Commvault, Plasmon, VirtualIron, ONStor, VMWare, Attix5, Intransamongst others.

Clunk Click Ltd is a division of Risc Group which is listed on the Euronext Paris stock market in compartment C, with corporate capital of €36,604,578.50. Risc Group has over 30,000 customers ranging from SMBs, to enterprise and employs 490 people within its network of 25 offices in 6 countries (UK, France, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium and Spain).

