



Advanstor™

Case Study: ColoSpace

Self-Protecting Storage

If your company earns its keep by providing information technology services, you need to be certain that you do IT right. ColoSpace, Inc. is such a company. Founded in 1996 and headquartered in the Boston, Massachusetts area, the company got its start by providing Internet access and server colocation space. A few years ago, it decided to expand to become a full-service provider by offering other value-added services. Today, with about 200 customers, primarily in the high tech, financial services and healthcare sectors, ColoSpace is one of the largest regional providers of colocation, Internet access, disaster recovery and application hosting services. Its impressive customer list includes three of the world's top 10 pharmaceutical companies, three of the top five financial houses, and several Fortune 500 companies.

Customers entrust ColoSpace with some of their most important data and systems. Failure is not an option for these companies. That's why ColoSpace chose ExaGrid's Advanstor self-protecting storage as a cost-effective way to protect its customers data.

ColoSpace Locates Better Storage

ColoSpace's transition to a full-service firm has been quite successful. More than 50% of its revenue now comes from value-added services rather than from the company's original focus, data center space and Internet access services. The provision of low-cost, yet highly reliable storage solutions is a new and important element in the company's full-service strategy. When faced with the choice of either building their own storage network or buying storage capacity on demand from a supplier like ColoSpace, many companies see the advantage of the latter approach.

ColoSpace knew that to be successful it had to deliver more than just raw storage capacity. Instead, ColoSpace needed to offer highly reliable storage that would provide the greatest possible protection against data loss. Furthermore, to make it a viable venture, ColoSpace also needed cost-effective storage that would allow it to

deliver a solution that was affordable for customers, while still being profitable for the company. The answer was Advanstor self-protecting storage.

Self-Protecting Storage

ExaGrid's Advanstor line of self-protecting storage combines low-cost storage devices with innovative storage management software to provide a cost-effective, easy to use and manage solution that provides superior data protection.

Advanstor delivers a grid-based storage utility that protects against file loss, file corruption, and component or site loss. It does so by virtualizing storage into networked and distributed repositories using Advanstor GRIDdisks™. It then manages automated backups and redundancy based on user-defined storage management rules. Powerful Advanstor InfiniteFilers™, provide a universal interface to a storage grid that masks the underlying technologies.

Advanstor, with its self-protecting storage architecture, ensures full online protection for data by providing backup, restore, disaster recovery, and archiving. Self-protecting storage supplements or replaces tape drives, libraries, and offsite vaulting with disk-based repositories. This results in high availability, fast backups and immediate restores. The grid ensures data integrity by continually verifying and repairing data. Grid repositories can be networked across multiple data centers for efficient, cost-effective, disaster recovery. Advanstor also includes easy-to-configure, automated management.

The ExaGrid Advantage

ColoSpace took a very pragmatic approach to its search for reliable and cost-effective storage. In addition to evaluating Advanstor, it also looked at assembling its own storage solution out of component parts. The company's analysis showed that it could save about 30% just in hardware and software costs by using Advanstor rather than the hybrid alternative.

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The 30% advantage consists of only measurable, hard-dollar savings resulting from lower hardware and software costs. It does not include the significantly reduced labor costs that accrue because Advanstor integrates the administration of all storage devices and automates backup and recovery services. Using a hybrid solution, with components bought from different vendors, each component would have to be administered individually. In addition, using that fragmented approach, implementing effective backup and recovery processes would have required the purchase, installation and administration of a separate software package. In contrast, with Advanstor, all administration can be done by authorized personnel from anywhere in the world through a single, Web-based console, without the need for any operator intervention for regular backup and restore processes.

ColoSpace's initial Advanstor installation is spread across two of its facilities, with each facility containing one terabyte of data capacity managed by one InfiniteFiler and three GRIDdisks. The company reports that the installation process went very smoothly. ExaGrid was thoroughly involved in the entire process, right down to the necessary wiring.

One of the things that impressed ColoSpace was that Advanstor incorporates industry-standard hardware components from companies like Dell. This ensures that it will be easy to maintain and upgrade the hardware well into the future.

ColoSpace is also very appreciative of the service provided by ExaGrid. "We buy a lot of hardware and are very demanding, but the ExaGrid folks have been terrific," explained Aaron Sawchuk, CTO at ColoSpace. "They go out of their way to help. For example, we had a file that was getting bigger and bigger and becoming a problem for the backup process. ExaGrid noticed that and called us to say there was an issue and 'You should look at this.' I was not really expecting that level of support. ExaGrid took the initiative to look at what was going wrong and fix it. Its support has been well above our expectations."

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**—Aaron Sawchuk
CTO, ColoSpace**

At the time of writing, Advanstor had been fully operational at ColoSpace for only about 30 days, but the company is already seeing a good reception from customers. That's not surprising. Advanstor allows ColoSpace to offer its customers exceptionally reliable storage solutions. Combine that with Advanstor's low total cost of ownership and you have a formula that adds value to the bottom lines of ColoSpace *and* its customers.

For more information about storage that cares for your data, contact ExaGrid at the address below.

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