Market Roundup

New SMB Storage and Services from IBM

RSA and EarthLink Team Up to Improve User Security

IBM's Medium Mainframe Comes with Extra-Large Security

VMware Releases TCO Calculator

STORServer Announces VCB Appliance

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New SMB Storage and Services from IBM

By Clay Ryder

IBM has announced new hardware and services targeted at SMB clients. The new storage offerings include enhanced configurations of the IBM System Storage DS3200 and DS3400, entry-level disk arrays featuring integrated management software designed to provide a simple, reliable, and affordable solution. Various components of the DS3200 and DS3400 such as controllers, cables, and host bus adapters (HBA) will now be bundled into specific configurations, making it easier for SMB customers to purchase the solution that best suits their business needs. IBM Global Technology Services also announced new services that combine IBM methodologies and prior engagement experiences to help clients more efficiently store, manage, understand, and leverage data within the context of enterprise content management. IBM Implementation Services for Enterprise Content Management helps clients to effectively deploy IBM Content Manager, CommonStore for Mail, and Records Manager technology. IBM Storage Optimization and Integration Services assist clients in designing a storage environment that identifies existing storage management efficiencies while reclaiming and consolidating storage space, and in determining opportunities to reuse existing technology. IBM Migration Services for Data helps migrate clients' data to IBM NAS solutions from older IBM storage devices or from non-IBM NAS storage devices. The newly configured IBM System Storage DS3000 series products are now available with a starting price of $4,200. The new storage services are currently available from IBM Global Technology Services.

There is plenty happening this week in the storage marketplace, in large part due to the Storage Networking World show taking place in San Diego. This announcement is interesting given its focus on the SMB marketplace and its solution-plus-services approach. While there are many vendors who ascribe themselves as being SMB friendly, just how good a friend they are is often a matter of debate. SMBs are typically a tactically driven lot, due not necessarily to desire, but to the reality of limited human or capital resources. Yet storage is one segment of IT that increasingly can no longer be effectively dealt with at a tactical level due to sheer volume of data, ever tighter compliance and governance mandates, and the historic inefficiencies evident in many an installation. SMBs are feeling the squeeze from a variety of factors, yet for the most part do not have the internal resources or bandwidth to effect needed changes. This is where appropriately constituted services combined with technology refresh can play a beneficial role.

The latest configurations of the DS3000 series offer entry price points that should resonate well with the smaller scale of the market especially for organizations that have been tasked with new storage initiatives such as implementing a content management solution for part or most of the inhouse storage. Combining these opportunities with the implementation services for ECM, a smaller firm that wishes to manage common unstructured data such as email in a more strategic fashion may find this configuration is just what is needed. With compliance mandates from regulators and increasingly from trading partners becoming the norm, SMBs will likely find themselves being required to adhere to information management regimens that they themselves might not otherwise have pursued but which are becoming table stakes in order to play in today's marketplace. Additionally, we believe the Migration Services for Data are also well positioned to meet SMB needs. With the

continued growth of data being created and stored, many existing storage solutions are beginning to reach the end of their capacity. Further, some older solutions are less energy- and space-efficient than current state-of-the-art options. By providing a services engagement to assist in the migration of existing NAS storage onto current generation technology, organizations could improve their capacity for growth while improving the cost structure, and perhaps even performance, of their NAS solution. This of course dovetails with a strategic focus on content management and compliance as well highlighting the needs for optimization and integration, the other new service offering.

Overall, we are pleased to continue to witness IBM's commitment to the SMB marketplace through its hardware, software, and services offerings. As the economic malaise of the first half of the 2000s seems to be making its way into the history books, SMBs in particular are now in the position of seeking to recapture competitive advantage through their smart deployment of IT. Given the limited scale and scope of in-house resources, most SMBs will be looking for outside assistance in many of their strategic implementation plans. We believe the combination of the new DS3000 series configurations with well proportioned service offerings for SMB positions IBM well to address this marketplace need.

RSA and EarthLink Team Up to Improve User Security

By Lawrence D. Dietz

RSA and EarthLink have reinforced their working relationship to help provide enhanced security and boost consumer confidence online. The companies started working together in 2005 when EarthLink joined the RSA FraudAction Blocking Network in order to enhance its phisher-blocking tools and services further. With today's announcement, EarthLink has also joined the RSA FraudAction worldwide detection network, a move that will augment RSA's ability to counter more attacks faster, and provide end users with greater protection against online threats such as phishing.

RSA recognizes that speed is critical when dealing with such attacks. The RSA FraudAction service includes a broad detection network that is designed to allow RSA's 24x7 Anti-Fraud Command Center to be rapidly aware of unfolding attacks. RSA's fraud analysts then block and shut down the attacks to mitigate any potential damage. The RSA detection network includes feeds from a number of sources, including various anti-spam partners, domain-monitoring honeypots, and more. EarthLink, which encourages its users to report phishing attacks, sends RSA a feed of phishing attacks and the copies of phishing emails that are provided by its users; this additional source enhances RSA's detection capabilities and assists in mitigating attacks as early as possible.

Since mid-2005, the RSA 24x7 Anti-Fraud Command Center has provided data to enhance ScamBlocker, EarthLink's consumer application designed to help protect Internet users from insidious phishing site scams. RSA sends EarthLink and its other blocking partners a feed of confirmed fraudulent sites. EarthLink's ScamBlocker then warns users before they access known or suspected phishing sites, and redirects them to an EarthLink-generated Web page that provides additional information about phishing and similar online scams, and details on the actions subscribers can take to further protect themselves. ScamBlocker is available to all Internet users, not just EarthLink access subscribers.

Sageza believes that the symbiotic relationship between RSA and EarthLink is a model for others to follow. Each harnesses the strength of the other to provide a combination of interlaced capabilities that clearly demonstrate that the sum is greater than the combination of parts. As the primary face to its customer, EarthLink recognizes that the ISP must provide the tools that help protect the customer. The social engineering/human appeal nature of phishing attacks requires myriad complementary sources to discover the attack and quick—if not instant—reaction to block these attacks before they reach the customer. The RSA/EarthLink combination appears to effectively blend both of these elements.

We believe that over time attacks will become even more sophisticated than they are today. The average consumer and perhaps even the highly sophisticated one will no longer be able to distinguish a legitimate communication from a fraudulent one on its face. Consequently electronic safeguards will have to be put into place to insulate the consumer from the attack. These safeguards will exhibit a number of characteristics: they cannot impede the

user's operation and they have to be user-transparent or user-friendly. The RSA/EarthLink combination appears to be right on the mark.

IBM's Medium Mainframe Comes with Extra-Large Security

By Lawrence D. Dietz

IBM has announced that it has made several advances in the System z mainframe security architecture that are designed to extend mainframe features to a growing base of medium-sized mainframe customers operating under IT resource constraints. These new advances are in three central areas: lowering the costs of network and data protection, extending mainframe security for Linux, and enabling customers to meet regulatory compliance requirements securely. According to the company, the IBM System z mainframe combines the security with the centralized management to deliver the most comprehensive and flexible phalanx of security safeguards and capabilities available today. New System z security advancements include lowering the costs of network and data protection through enhancement to System z end-to-end network encryption with new IPsec use of zIIP specialty engine; lower entry cost of secure-key encryption with new single port CryptoExpress2 card for the System z9 Business Class mainframe; CryptoExpress2, a feature that protects encryption keys from disclosure, modification, and misuse; and planned System z operating system support for new low-end 3400 Tape Library featuring encrypting drives.

Mainframe security for Linux is extended with new support for secure-key encryption with CryptoExpress2, which holds the industry's top hardware rating, FIPS 140-2 Level 4. With this enhancement customers benefit from higher protection of Linux encryption applications with support for the System z mainframe's tamper-resistant encryption processor. CryptoExpress2 "secure-key" processing allows customers to leverage a secret encryption key on a card for greater security and data protection. Another addition is Multilevel Security support with new RedHat support for Security Enhanced Linux for System z (SELinux). Rounding out the announcement are two complementary products to help customers meet regulatory compliance requirements securely: InSight and zSecure product suites from Consul (acquired by IBM) and new DB2 V9 and tools to improve security management, data encryption, and auditing.

Sageza believes that IBM is in a class by itself when it comes to large-scale computing. IBM also has a mastery of architecture in the way that its components are integrated to optimize overall performance. A case in point is the Specialty Engine: processors that can help users expand the use of the mainframe for new workloads, while helping to lower cost of ownership. The IBM System z specialty engines can run independently or complement each other. Encryption is an application that is well suited to this architecture and this use of the zIIP Specialty Engine to process encryption to enable end-to-end encryption from the mainframe to the end device should significantly boost the price/performance ratio of this critical process. Reinforcement of crypto-security with a tamper-resistant encryption processor is another key step to mainstreaming cryptography in a transparent manner. This improves security without degrading performance.

We also note that IBM is mindful of the need to synergize multiple product lines, as demonstrated by the inclusion of the DB2 V9 and recently acquired Consul products into the security-oriented announcement. IBM also astutely recognizes that even that best of hardware and software can not ensure compliance. IBM advises its clients that "It is the customer's responsibility to identify, interpret, and comply with any laws or regulatory requirements that affect its business. IBM does not represent that its products or services will ensure that the customer is in compliance with the law." Sageza believes this is clearly the right approach and it is no wonder that IBM is still the leader of the mainframe pack.

VMware Releases TCO Calculator

By Clay Ryder

Earlier this week, VMware released a self-service Web-based TCO calculator that estimates the ROI of VMware infrastructure. The VMware TCO Calculator requires a few user inputs to quickly generate a detailed report assessing each area where a customer can expect potential savings. The TCO Calculator uses a robust methodology based on VMware customer surveys and experience in the field from working on VMware Infrastructure

production deployments. A 2006 VMware survey of 1,800+ VMware customers confirms the benefits of deploying VMware Infrastructure. The majority of customers surveyed expressed that they reduced hardware acquisition and energy costs by at least 30%, improved staff productivity by more than 30%, and decreased server provisioning times by at least 40%. One customer reference indicated that with 230 virtual systems executing business applications on 18 physical servers, the annual savings are approximately $1.7 million ($7,500 per virtualized server) in avoided hardware and maintenance costs. The VMware TCO Calculator is one example of the tools and services VMware and authorized VMware partners offer to help customers get started with virtualization. After using the TCO Calculator, customers can request a virtualization assessment that provides a complete roadmap to virtual infrastructure based on a detailed analysis of a customer's environment. The VMware TCO Calculator is free of charge and is now available at www.vmware.com/go/calculator.

Conventional wisdom states that server virtualization leads to enhanced utilization and reduced operational costs. However, conventional wisdom rarely offers specific calculable proof points. Deciding IT strategy based upon gut feelings may be sporting, but it lacks the cost analysis discipline that is expected by CIOs and other IT management. With this announcement we are happy to see a straightforward means to help quantify the economic value of virtualization. While there are likely other homegrown calculators that been developed to answer this ROI question, it is reassuring to the marketplace when a vendor steps up to the plate and provides some dynamic proof points of the business value of its solutions.

By making this calculator freely available, we believe VMware has made a shrewd investment into what could become some very effective viral marketing. Given that most organizations probably do not really know how much cost containment a virtualization scheme could provide, the results from the calculator may prove startling. News of such excitement travels quickly amongst peers, which may result in many more organizations, especially those in the lower echelons of the SMB realm, running some base calculations and then stopping to consider that virtualization might in fact be a good and defendable course of action. Even for organizations who inherently understand the value proposition of virtualization, having concrete and defendable ROI numbers enables these IT professionals to press the case for virtualization with upper management who may be gun-shy of anything that sounds like IT exploratory money spending with no proof of return. We believe that the VMware TCO Calculator will go a long way to help educate organizations on the economic value of virtualization and will also provide channel partners with a handy tool to help jumpstart conversations with their customer base as to the economic benefits of virtualization.

STORServer Announces VCB Appliance

By Clay Ryder

STORServer has announced its new STORServer VCB Appliance that is designed to backup VMware environments. The STORServer VCB Appliance incorporates VMware Consolidated Backup to improve manageability of backups, disaster recovery, and archiving capabilities, and to reduce costs by centralizing the backup of ESX servers thereby eliminating the need to have individual backup agents on each virtual and/or host machine. Using Consolidated Backup, a backup schedule is created on the STORServer for each virtual machine. Each schedule creates a virtual machine snapshot, mounts the snapshot to the STORServer in the SAN, then uses the STORServer backup client to either back up the full virtual machine or to perform file-level incremental backups, thus allowing the virtual machine to continue to operate while the backups are taking place. When the backup is complete the schedule dismounts and releases the snapshot of the virtual machine. Pricing for the STORServer VCB Appliance starts at $20,000 and the appliance is available through a network of authorized resellers nationwide. For existing customers, STORServer indicated that it will offer several options and configurations for VMware backups on any of their appliances.

With the number of virtualized environments steadily increasing, the ease of deploying said environments makes an interesting conundrum for IT support professionals. How does one easily back up a virtual environment, when by definition it lacks long-term, firmly defined physical attributes? Further, if one were to approach the backup from a traditional software perspective, there would need to be a backup agent running on each virtual machine, which in aggregate uses up considerably more system resources than a single agent on a single physical machine. VMware has addressed some of the complexity of backing up its environments through its Consolidated Backup

facility, and for some this has been a welcomed capability. Further, when combined with EMC's Avamar technology, the solution can substantially reduce duplicative file backups which are more commonplace in virtual environments, given the multiple copies of operating system files to support each virtual machine, but which often contain identical content. However, for many others, backup of their virtual machines is tactical at best, and more than likely a cumbersome manual process with all of the requisite issues associated with such approaches.

With this in mind, we see an opportunity for a VMware knowledgeable backup appliance. Through its appliance design, the system is discrete from the VM servers and therefore does not create any additional load on the VMs and is not susceptible to any failure or other impact on the host machines for the VMs. Given its discrete placement on the SAN and appliance form factor, this implies a simple ease-of-use scenario, one that will likely be well received by SMBs and other organizations that have been perplexed by the complexity of setting VM backup processes. While the solution may not offer the same degree of configuration and customization that traditional backup software may offer, the goal of an appliance is to alleviate this very need for extensive setup and operational management. From our vantage point STORServer seems to have struck a good balance between ease of use and capability delivered, and addresses a real need in the marketplace, especially for organizations with scarce IT resource but who are already benefiting from virtualized server environments.