



Technology and Know-How Spell Benefits

*by Mark Waldrep
President
Datatrend Technologies*

Storage technology and storage solutions concepts/approaches continue to evolve. New levels of performance and manageability features have advanced beyond most forecasts in a relatively short period of time.

Users desiring the lowest cost in "per megabyte" storage and high performance, would typically seek out one of the modular storage offerings on the market often in the class of IBM's FASTT line (now rebranded to the DS series). Modular storage offered the best price performance but with minimal management tools as compared to enterprise class offerings like the HDS Lighting series or IBM's ESS (Shark).



Top of model enterprise class storage solutions, like IBM's ESS (now also rebranded to the DS product line) are offered with standard and optional tools to help clients manage heterogenous environments with reasonably high performance; yet still not at the performance levels of modular storage.

Therefore, the choice was often a compromise-- either go with minimal tools and the highest performance or spend more money for enterprise class tools and relatively high performance. Today, clients can break away from the compromising, decision-making paradigm with IBM's SAN Volume Controller (SVC), featured also within this issue's Software Corner and the Industry Trends case study.

With IBM's SVC, users can virtualize the storage environment and greatly enhance utilization. Since the SVC works in conjunction with most prominent storage hardware appliances and systems, companies can now take greater advantage of hardware offerings with minimal toolsets as the SVC manages the virtualized environment. Users, in some cases, will not need to buy higher cost per megabyte storage systems, as at least the baseline tools will be not needed in light of the SVC capability set.

To ensure an ROI in light of the SVC cost levels:

1. Align with a partner than has the skills/track record to assess the user environment, infrastructure, skills and goals
2. Work with the partner to develop a tailored design and implementation plan
3. Allow the partner to provide SVC training in concert with a best practices review so as to be able to take maximum advantage of the SVC capabilities and benefits
4. Develop a management level commitment and mandate to implement the lessons learned, best practices procedures and utilization objectives.

Virtualization and specifically, IBM's SVC, provide great new capabilities. Users will need to align with a professional group with the qualifications and experience to assist in implementing a solution that garners the maximum benefits for the given organization. Serious business and required results are driven, in part, by applying the right technology in concert with a commitment by people to succeed.

***Datatrend's TrendSetter eNewsletter
October 15, 2004***