

Weekly Review

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EMC Launches VMware-Enhanced CLARiiON Solutions

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EMC unveiled new virtualization-aware features for its midrange CLARiiON CX4 networked storage systems optimized for VMware environments. These include:

- A new version of EMC Navisphere Manager enables virtualization-aware storage management. Through integration with VMware vSphere, the resulting solution delivers end-to-end physical-to-virtual mapping, helping administrators meet Service Level Agreement (SLA) and Quality of Service (QoS) goals.
- Shared 10Gb/s Ethernet and 8Gb/s Fibre Channel (FC) connectivity options, which allow CLARiiON owners to flexibly choose technologies with the right blend of availability, connectivity and performance for their storage and business needs.
- New EMC RecoverPoint and EMC Replication Manager's capabilities which deliver enhanced ease-of-use, cost efficiency and data availability for VMware environments. According to EMC, these new features are key enablers for private clouds and 'fully virtualized' information infrastructures.

EMC offers 8Gb/s FC today solutions and will offer 10Gb/s Ethernet on CLARiiON CX4 networked storage systems in the third quarter of 2009. Both 8Gb/s and 10Gb/s Ethernet are available today on EMC Celerra systems. Virtualization-aware Navisphere Manager and the new versions of RecoverPoint and Replication Manager are available worldwide from EMC, its Velocity2 Program Velocity2 Authorized Services Network (ASN) Partners and are also being offered by Dell.

The Pitch

New EMC solutions expand midrange storage options for VMware customers.

Mission Accomplished?

Server virtualization, particularly in x86/64-based systems, continues to drive fundamental datacenter transformation in businesses of every sort. In particular, solutions, such as VMware's ESX Server enable companies to efficiently execute significant, often massive datacenter consolidation efforts, reducing the total number of servers they require to a fraction of what was once necessary.

This provides obvious benefits related to acquisition (or CAPEX) costs but also results in often profound, long-term operations (OPEX) savings. It is also one of the reasons that VMware has grown from a niche technology specialist to an innovative vendor with nearly \$2 billion in annual revenues, and why Microsoft, Citrix and others have enthusiastically joined the hunt.

However, as these transformational efforts ripple into virtually every corner of the datacenter, their immediate benefits tend to obscure often considerable challenges. Consolidating applications and workloads means that an organization requires fewer servers than it once did, but those more-efficient boxes require and consume far more bandwidth and memory than their pitifully underutilized forebears.

Vendors have addressed many or most of these issues—virtualization-enhanced systems based on Intel's new Xeon 5500 (Nehalem) chips are good examples. But what happens to IT processes and administration beyond the server? Particularly in areas, like data storage,

which are tangibly responsible for the continuing health and well-being of individual business applications and entire organizations? These are the issues that EMC's new virtualization-aware solutions for CLARiiON CX4 are designed to address.

EMC Navisphere Manager's new features aim to simplify elemental provisioning and management practices in VMware-based datacenters, helping administrators meet critical SLA and QoS goals. The new 10Gb/s Ethernet and 8Gb/s Fibre Channel (FC) solutions provide powerful assurance that CLARiiON owners can support the network demands of VMware-enabled systems. Their new capabilities mean EMC RecoverPoint and EMC Replication Manager can more easily and cost-effectively support critical CLARiiON-based back-up to disk and disaster recovery processes.

Just as importantly, while these solutions will be effective in existing VMware-based datacenters, they can also be applied in emerging cloud computing infrastructures enabled by VMware's vSphere. That demonstrates an admirable level of "future-proofing" available in EMC products. According to the company, CLARiiON is the only mid-tier array that supports the automated discovery and reporting of virtual machines. It also illustrates EMC's longer-term strategy of integrating comprehensive virtualization support into all of its products.

Perhaps most notably, EMC's new CLARiiON CX4 features highlight the degree to which virtualization is demolishing the walls between storage and system administrators. In traditional datacenters, cabling marked the physical connections and boundaries between systems and storage. In virtualized environments, those relationships are abstracted to a degree that can materially impact administrators' efforts and efficiency. EMC's new virtualization-aware features reflect the company's recognition of the growing interdependency of storage and system administrators and its intention to provide solutions to these myriad challenges both today and in the future.

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Pund-IT emphasizes understanding technology and product evolution and interpreting the effects these changes will have on business customers and the greater IT marketplace.