

Shoden delivers real intelligence into the storage space

The world is experiencing a rapid growth in data as more and more organisations make use of unstructured data applications such as e-mail and collaboration tools. Along with social media engines and online business apps, rich media data is growing exponentially and this, in turn, has led to an increasing demand for storage.

To tackle this problem, storage vendors have found that they have to become more innovative in regard to how they have historically delivered solutions to the market. In order to meet these demands, Adrian Wood, Business Development Manager at Shoden Data Systems, says that the capacities of single disk drives have been increasing exponentially.

“A decade ago, the largest drives available were around 18GB in size, whereas today we are looking at above 2TB with 50TB in the near future - implying that capacities have increased by more than a hundredfold. Of course, this massive increase in additional drive capacities has meant an attendant compromise in regards to performance,” he says.

“While it has been relatively easy to make larger capacity disks to supply the demand for volume, it is a much tougher proposition to improve performance. The only way to do this effectively is to make use of solid state disks (SSD), which by using an alternative technology, enables a dramatic increase in performance capability.”

He says that although SSD can improve performance considerably, it is also a very expensive technology, costing up to 30 times more than standard storage technologies. For this reason, the best way to effectively utilise SSD is through the concept of dynamic tiering. Wood says that if

used correctly, dynamic tiering will give customers the performance and capacity they require at the most cost effective price.

He says that the concept of Information Lifecycle Management (ILM) is based on a philosophy of optimising the storage environment. The idea, he says, is that the value of data changes over time, generally with the most recently created data having the highest value, as it is most often accessed. This is the data that requires high performance storage. As the data ages, its access requirements decreases, meaning it can be moved to a lower performance storage tier, one which is more economical than SSD.

“While organisations aspired to the idea behind ILM, understanding that most information loses value rapidly, the execution was not particularly successful due to the reliance on human intervention in determining what was considered high and what was low value data,” he says.

“However, thanks to Hitachi’s Virtual Storage Platform (VSP) technology, the realisation of effective ILM can now be achieved. This technology leverages both hardware and software to deliver automated lifecycle management and tiering within the storage environment.”

Wood also points out that VSP acts as a storage virtualisation engine as well. This, he says, means that customers can use the VSP to virtualise their existing storage assets and therefore create a single virtualised pool of storage. In other words, customers can utilise the VSP to more effectively sweat their existing assets, while massively improving performance and manageability.

“There are additional benefits offered by SSD, in the form of how they speak directly to the green agenda. In combination with the VSP, organisa-



Adrian Wood,
business development manager

tions will realise unmatched reductions in power, cooling and space utilisation. One of the goals of integrating SSD into enterprise storage is to reduce the overall storage cost without compromising on the performance or capacity. This is where Shoden aims to take SSD – we want to reach a point where we can deliver a solution that delivers huge performance on single virtual platform, in order to help to create greener storage environments.”

“Of course all of the above is driven by the market, so the aim from our perspective is to deliver exactly what our customers are asking for. The VSP has been designed with these requirements in mind, in order to facilitate the kind of storage that will not only meet our customers’ needs now, but also well into the future,” concludes Wood.