



Storage Virtualization Comes of Age - IBM to Resell DataCore's SANsymphony

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Virtualization is not a new concept; neither is storage virtualization.¹ 2001 was the year in which many vendors and enterprises began discussing benefits of storage virtualization:

- Economic (better return on assets, including storage arrays),
- Increased agility (to respond the ever-changing demands of business units, users, and customers), and
- Easier administration (better use of storage administrator's scarce, valuable time).

There are many vendors with strategies to deliver these benefits; some call it storage virtualization, others call it enhanced storage management. These vendors run the gamut from young software companies, whose only business is software for enhanced storage management, to traditional storage array providers. **The number one question on IT buyers' minds today is whether these enhanced storage management products (and architectures) are ready for prime time in the high-end enterprise space.**

No matter how many mid-size deployments serve as references for these products, credibility does not come easily. It takes either visible adoption by large enterprises or conservative endorsements to open the floodgate. And that is what has happened. IBM, the company known to have the most conservative and stringent requirements for adoption of a new technology and offering of a third-party product, will offer and provide assessment and deployment services for DataCore's SANsymphony storage networking software for use with its Enterprise Storage Server (codenamed "Shark") high-end storage array, with other arrays to follow. **This is a significant endorsement of DataCore's technology, but also a significant milestone in the maturation of storage virtualization schemes. IBM's action signals the beginning of the next wave in storage – adoption (i.e., wide-spread acceptance) of the separation of the logical and physical aspects of storage.** Lots of players are in this space, but this deal is just what the market requires to give serious consideration to moving forward with enhanced storage management architectures and products.

IBM has carefully avoided describing its DataCore offering as storage virtualization, preferring to call it LUN management. But we think that any approach that clearly separates the logical management of files and databases from the physical storage on which it resides is storage virtualization. Whatever they want to call it, **we have now officially entered this new age of enhanced storage management. Now is the time for medium and large enterprises to move beyond discussion and to begin thinking about adoption. Storage virtualization offers significant opportunities for improving the cost and efficiency of information delivery. It's time to compare the alternatives and prepare to deploy in 2002.**



¹ See The Clipper Group Explorer dated April 9, 2001, entitled *Storage Virtualization in 2001: A Space Odyssey*.

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About the Author

Mike Kahn is Chairman and a cofounder of The Clipper Group. Mr. Kahn is a thirty-year veteran of the computer industry. For the vendor community, Mr. Kahn specializes on strategic marketing issues, especially for new and costly technologies and services, competitive analysis, and sales support. For the end-user community, he focuses on mission-critical information management decisions. Prior positions held by Mr. Kahn include: at International Data Corporation — Director of the Competitive Resource Center, Director of Consulting for the Software Research Group, and Director of the Systems Integration Program; President of Power Factor Corporation, a Boston-based electronics firm; at Honeywell Bull — Director of International Marketing and Support; at Honeywell Information Systems — Director of Marketing and Director of Strategy, Technology and Research; with Arthur D. Little, Inc. — a consultant specializing in database management systems and information resource management; and, for Intel Corporation, Mr. Kahn served in a variety of field and home office marketing management positions. Earlier, he founded and managed PRISM Associates of Ann Arbor, Michigan, a systems consulting firm specializing in data management products and applications. Mr. Kahn also managed a relational DBMS development group at The University of Michigan where he earned B.S.E. and M.S.E. degrees in industrial engineering.

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