



EMC Takes Another Step Toward Heterogeneous Storage with Information Solutions Consulting

Analyst: Michael Fisch

Last year, EMC began to turn its ship toward the uncharted waters of heterogeneous storage. First, it separated its hardware and software development groups to break the mostly-exclusive link between the two. Then, EMC announced *AutoIS*, a broad initiative to create software for managing heterogeneous storage environments. Out of that flowed the *WideSky* platform, the API exchange with HP, and enhancements to *EMC Control Center* for working with third-party storage arrays. And most recently, **EMC announced an agreement with Accenture to establish a new organization within EMC's Global Services that provides platform-independent storage consulting services. This new group is Information Solutions Consulting (ISC).** These services take an end-to-end, strategic view of storage to ensure that the infrastructure is flexible and aligned with business needs.

EMC's embrace of heterogeneity is motivated by a shift in large-enterprise attitudes toward storage from *performance and availability at all cost* to *performance and availability at an optimized cost*. Times have changed. The dot-com boom is over; the economy has dipped; and enterprises are watching IT expenses like a hawk. Though information is as critical to enterprise success as ever, **fast data growth is forcing enterprises to find even more cost-effective methods of storing it.** Centralized management of heterogeneous storage has emerged as *the new ideal* because it can significantly cut administrative costs (by far the largest component of storage TCO) in the complex, multi-vendor storage environments found in most large enterprises. It also provides greater flexibility in procurement and facilitates tiered storage classes – where high-end arrays are used for critical applications and less-costly storage for others – to lower overall acquisition costs. **As a result, management simplicity in heterogeneous environments is the new competitive arena of the storage industry.**

Of course, EMC does not want to lose. It is fair to say that EMC won the last round of the storage industry, though it must renew and prove itself again to be successful in the next one. **The winners will be vendors that can think big – bigger than their own product lines, however good – and help enterprises lower storage TCO.**

So will EMC's new ISC service be truly platform-independent? On one hand, it would only be natural for a vendor to want to sell its own wares. But EMC has taken pains to ensure independence by establishing a separate business unit and joining forces with Accenture. Moreover, EMC's strategic turn toward heterogeneity suggests that it understands the new rules of the game and will pay more than lip service to platform independence. **It would suggest that ISC is a bona fide effort by EMC to give enterprises what they want – help with getting their arms around, and taking advantage of, heterogeneous storage.**



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