



## Sun Lays Down the Gauntlet with CIM Support

Analyst: Michael Fisch

Leading the pack of storage vendors, Sun recently announced *StorEdge Enterprise Storage Manager* (ESM), a CIM-compliant storage area network (SAN) management platform. The purpose of ESM is to direct the operation of a SAN through device discovery, topology mapping, health monitoring, and device configuration – similar to a conductor in front of an orchestra. **It can save enterprises money by making it easier to manage complex, multi-vendor SAN environments.** This is a worthwhile and even necessary benefit as storage requirements continue to grow quickly and management, namely skilled labor, represents the great cost of storage ownership.

**CIM, or Common Interface Model, is an open standard for managing SAN devices.** One can think of it as a common language for monitoring and configuration, and it is a quantum leap forward in SAN interoperability and management.

**Today, managing SANs is more like herding cats.** There are storage arrays, switches, host bus adapters, and so forth – each with its own proprietary API (i.e., administrative interface) and device manager. IT administrators must learn all the different managers and try to get the pieces to work well together – a tricky and time-consuming job.

**The magic of CIM is that it allows everything to speak the same language, creating an environment of cooperation that benefits everyone.** Software vendors do not have to spend time and money licensing and integrating proprietary APIs from every device they wish to support. Ideally, CIM makes universal support a given. Instead, storage hardware and software vendors will be able to focus their resources on developing smart, powerful new features. Enterprises will benefit from these better tools for centrally managing their diverse SAN environments. They also will have more freedom to deploy equipment from multiple vendors, encouraging healthy competition based on innovation rather than vendor lock-in.

**While most major storage players have announced intentions to support CIM, Sun is the first to deliver.** It is true that there are few CIM-compliant devices on the market today, and Sun can currently manage only its own T3, 3900, and 6900 arrays using CIM. **One could say that Sun is early, but that is exactly the point. The industry needed a major player to take the lead and encourage or prod others to follow suit because enterprises stand to gain so much from the broad adoption of CIM.**

So three cheers to Sun for being the first. They have gained significant momentum in storage, as evidenced not only by this announcement, but also by steady advancements in high-end and mid-range storage arrays (i.e., 9900, 6900, and 3900 series) as well as its *StorEdge* storage management software suites. **As we move into the next round of the storage industry, Sun is one to reckon with – if you're a rival, or one to consider – if you're an enterprise in need of more cost-effective ways to manage storage.**



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