



## Something New Under the Sun — EMC's Centera Embraces the Mainframe

### Something New

Mainframe users are accustomed to seeing “innovations” on the open systems side of the house and saying, “That’s nice, though we have been doing that on the mainframe for 20 years.” Or words to that effect. **For a mainframer, there is nothing new under the sun!** Of course, the mainframe is king of the hill for reliability, utilization, performance, and sophistication of management tools. It is also not going away and will continue to run many mission-critical applications, especially in larger organizations with the most stringent requirements. But in the case at hand, the trendy open systems crowd does have something new that the venerable mainframe has not yet seen.

### Centera and Fixed Content

The *EMC Centera* content-addressable storage (CAS) solution represents the first of a new category of online storage designed specifically for fixed content. While previously available for open systems environments only, EMC is now opening the door for mainframes.

Fixed content is the buzzword for digital objects that you:

- (1) Want to keep for a long time,
- (2) Don't want changed or altered, and
- (3) May need to access and use in the future.

This includes documents, images, transaction records, videos, scientific data, and just about anything that an enterprise might keep for reference purposes. The mainframe traditionally keeps these assets on tape or optical storage using archiving or hierarchical storage management (HSM) applications.

However, Centera was the first CAS solution that stores information on inexpensive disk arrays and delivers relatively fast, online access to data, as opposed to the nearline/offline characteristics of tape and optical. It avoids the media management costs and complexities of those technologies. Centera designates each digital object with a unique, content-based identifier that guarantees authenticity and eliminates duplicate storage. The *Compliance Edition Plus* can even meet the SEC's strict requirements for non-erasable and non-rewritable storage media. Centera scales non-disruptively and automatically protects data with either parity or duplication, including asynchronous mirroring over long distances. **In short, it offers a new tier of storage with software features and pricing suited for storing and retrieving fixed content.**

## Mainframe Connectivity

Today, Centera connects to a mainframe using third-party solutions. One is the *Bus-Tech Mainframe Appliance for Storage* (MAS). It is a tape emulation gateway that connects to a mainframe over ESCON and to Centera over IP. Applications using tape as storage media can take advantage of Centera with minimal disruption to the existing environment. The second is the *SystemWare Xact* enterprise content integration application, which includes Centera among its supported storage platforms and connects directly over IP. Furthermore, EMC hints at additional connectivity options to be available in the future.

## Conclusion

**For mainframe users – and you know who you are – it may be time to rethink how to deal with the growing quantities of fixed content.** Much of it is attached to mainframe systems, and business or regulatory requirements may dictate that at least some of it be stored online for easy searching and fast access. **Tape or optical solutions may not cut it, and now EMC's Centera CAS solution<sup>1</sup> has embraced the mainframe.**



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<sup>1</sup> For more details, see *Retrieving the Needle in the Haystack – EMC's Centera Manages by Content* in **The Clipper Group Navigator** dated May 20, 2002, at <http://www.clipper.com/research/TCG2002017.pdf>. See also *The Value of Guaranteed-Authentic Information – The Expanding Role of EMC's Centera* in **The Clipper Group Navigator** dated April 18, 2003, at <http://www.clipper.com/research/TCG2003015.pdf>.

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