IBM Offers New Storage Migration Tool — A Gauntlet for EMC? A Velvet Glove for Users?

Analyst: Joe De Natale

IT executives know that migrating portions of their infrastructure from one vendor to another or upgrading within a vendor's offering is often similar to being offered a three-legged stool with one leg longer than the other two. It fulfills the general description of a stool but lacks in practicality – try sitting on one – you keep on sliding off. The obvious solution is to make the legs all the same length. In the IT world this has been difficult to do. The first leg of the stool, price, makes the acquisition attractive. As in place equipment ages it becomes more expensive to maintain. Newer equipment gives the enterprise more bang for the buck because usually it is less expensive on a per-unit of capacity or performance basis. The second leg, performance, is important to IT since newer equipment is usually faster and has greater capacity. **The third leg – the longest one of this three-legged stool – is concerned with the migration of the old equipment to the new. This can be a formidable task with great challenges and potential hazards.** In evaluating upgrades to computer equipment, especially storage servers, the problem of migrating data from one storage server to another is a task that should not be casually performed. With the vast amounts of data to be moved and the ongoing demand for access to it around the clock, IT managers must consider the third leg of the stool, data migration, as an important acquisition consideration.

IBM has announced its answer to the problem of migration. The new program is designed to make the transfer from older storage servers, particularly EMC's storage servers, to IBM's storage servers. **This program, called *Piper*, is designed to greatly ease the daunting task of transferring data from one non-IBM storage server to IBM's.** The most important aspect of Piper is its patented technology for moving data from one device to an IBM storage server, without impacting the up-time of the IT system.   Data can be transferred on a non-disruptive basis in real time through specialized IBM appliances. As data is updated on the original storage server, it is replicated on the IBM storage server. Users see no impact on the service provided by the system.   IBM offers separate appliances for mainframe and open system data migration. The hardware involved for mainframe data migration is an IBM *Multiprise 3000* running under z/OS. A half-height, rack-mounted appliance, consisting of eight data migration engines, is used for data migration in open system environments.

In order to service customers who want to migrate from EMC's storage servers, IBM is involving its Business Partners as well as trained IBM specialists to assist enterprises in their migration efforts. IBM is providing its Business Partners with the tools to ease the process of migrating data from older EMC storage products to newer IBM storage solutions. Specialist will assess and analyze the current storage infrastructure of the customer and recommend an IBM storage solution that meets the enterprise's requirements for performance and return on investment. In addition, specialists will provide the migration appliance and move the data from the originating storage server to IBM's recommended solutions on a fee for service basis.

IBM has leveled what has been a lopsided and difficult to-achieve effort with a solution that is straightforward, easy to implement, and one that will not affect the users of the storage being relocated. While this is not the first data moving utility, it may be the first offered as a service via a transitional appliance. The free-for-all competition for your storage dollar continues.

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