Veritas Emerges as Utility Computing Contender

Analyst: Michael Fisch

Management Summary

Watching the IT industry is like riding a bus as it travels through a city. The stops are short, the scenery constantly changes, and there is always something new! The software vendor Veritas is no exception to the rule. From its origins as the "data protection company" (read: *backup* and a few other things), it has set its sites on traveling the high road of utility computing. This grand concept is about delivering IT as a service – in a precise, measured, dynamic, efficient, and cost-effective manner. It is a better way of aligning technology with the business. **Veritas' strategy is to offer an integrated, modular suite of software that enables utility computing.** While not alone in this vision, it has made good progress in a short time.

Assembling the Software

Through acquisition and internal development, Veritas has assembled an array of software products that span the IT infrastructure. Stretching from "high to low," it includes base-level functions, like its capable volume manager and file system combination called *Storage Foundation*, all the way to high-level management capabilities, like a platform called *CommandCentral Service* for provisioning and measuring storage as a service. With this vertical reach, the components can work together synergistically and impact the infrastructure at multiple levels. Their modularity means a customer does not have to invest them all, but the extra value of *1 + 1 = 3* is there, if so desired.

Furthermore, Veritas' software addresses the areas of availability, performance, and auto-mation across servers, storage, and applications. It supports the major open systems platforms of *Windows*, *UNIX*, *Linux*, and *NetWare*. This breadth and heterogeneity is important because **utility computing, in its final form, requires a software layer that coordinates the whole infrastructure and allows it to operate as a single entity while meeting a spectrum of different requirements (think of a conductor in front of an orchestra). That is, it must be able to support multiple applications, users, and service levels – without the fragmentation, inflexibility, and lack of coordination that characterize IT today.** To be sure, this is a tall order in the open systems world. But it is ultimately the best approach.

Veritas' software offering now includes:

- Backup and restore,
- Data lifecycle management,
- Volume management/virtualization,
- File system,
- Data replication and movement,

- Storage resource management,

- Server clustering,

- Server provisioning,

- Application performance management, and

- Non-disruptive application movement (with the pending acquisition of Ejasent).

Connecting the Dots

The list covers a lot of ground. Aside from additional software Veritas may acquire in the future to round out its portfolio, the real determinant of its success in utility computing will be how well it "connects the dots." **It has to integrate its software components into a cohesive whole – all the while maintaining support for heterogeneous environments.** This integration work is difficult, complex, and underappreciated. It is also the only way to achieve the vision.

So how is Veritas doing? Some of its significant linkages include:

- *Volume Manager* and *File System* have always been joined at the hip (*Storage Foundation*),

- *SANPoint Control*[1] can leverage Storage Foundation for automated storage provisioning and can discover and visualize other Veritas and third-party applications,

- *NetBackup* and *Backup Exec* now have a *Desktop and Laptop Option* for protecting data on clients and servers. They are also integrated with *Data Lifecycle Manager* to share the server and media between the data backup/restore and lifecycle management functions. NetBackup can leverage *Volume Replicator* to replicate the backup catalog to a remote failover site for faster recovery.

- CommandCentral Service provides an overarching management console for

NetBackup, Backup Exec, SANPoint Control, and *Storage Reporter* to deliver storage as a service.

- *Global Cluster Manager* coordinates Volume Replicator or third-party array-based replication for remote failover with Veritas' *Cluster Server*.

- Cluster Server uses Storage Foundation to share and replicate among nodes.

This may seem like a random list, but practically speaking, integration evolves in a piecemeal and opportunistic fashion. This list does show a concerted effort to tie together the various components, which are starting to coalesce. CommandCentral Service is especially impressive since it is fundamentally a manager of managers. Veritas' road map also hints at more to come, including integration points with the more recently-acquired OpForce and i3 products.

No Hardware Behind the Curtain

Veritas trumpets its "no hardware agenda" because it does not have one. Most vendors that are pushing in a major way toward utility computing also have a line of server, networking, or storage hardware to sell. Their software certainly supports heterogeneous environments, but they also have an interested in promoting their hardware and making sure the software works first and best with it. This is only natural and not a bad thing, per se, but if you view part of the utility vision as making hardware an inexpensive and interchangeable commodity, then you can see how this would introduce a subtle conflict. This is why Veritas is quick to point out that it has no hardware agenda. Some enterprises will find this reassuring, especially since picking a software provider for utility computing is more like a marriage than a date. The software becomes part and parcel of the IT infrastructure, and it is not as easy to trade out as the underlying hardware assets. **You want to hitch your wagon, so to speak, to a vendor with credibility, a solid track record, good products, and a sensible, open vision.**

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[1] See *Veritas SANPoint Control – Untangling the Web of Networked Storage* in **The Clipper Group Navigator** dated May 23, 2003, at http://www.clipper.com/research/TCG2003023.pdf.

Conclusion

Veritas is deliberately and incrementally stitching together a software solution for utility computing. It has come a long way in a short time. There is more work left to do – for Veritas and whole IT industry – but there is also value in current-generation software products with these capabilities. **If your enterprise is starting to think in terms of utility computing[2], especially about building one internally, Veritas is emerging as a serious contender.**

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[2] For more details, see *Shining the Light on Utility Computing – A Business Perspective* in **The Clipper Group Explorer** dated October 21, 2003, at http://www.clipper.com/research/TCG2003057.pdf.

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➢ *The Clipper Group can be reached at 781-235-0085 and found on the web at www.clipper.com.*

About the Author

Michael Fisch is Director of Storage and Networking for The Clipper Group. He brings over eight years of experience in the computer industry working in sales, market analysis and positioning, and engineering. Mr. Fisch worked at EMC Corporation as a marketing program manager focused on service providers and as a competitive market analyst. Before that, he worked in international channel development, manufacturing, and technical support at Extended Systems, Inc. Mr. Fisch earned an MBA from Babson College and a Bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from the University of Idaho.

➢*Reach Michael Fisch via e-mail at Mike.Fisch@clipper.com or at 781-235-0085 Ext. 25.*

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