



HP Takes a Shot at Storage

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Taking a Shot at Storage

As analysts, we have the chance to hear about many marketing and product launch programs. Some of the marketing programs deliver clear and concise messages, some clearly differentiate their product from the competition, and some, quite frankly, are not very exciting. However, occasionally we have the opportunity to see a marketing program that is new, refreshing, and innovative. HP's latest marketing campaign surrounding their XP storage is new, effective, and frankly, one of the most innovative programs that we have seen.

HP has been marketing its high-end XP storage arrays for many years and its systems engineers have been telling customers that this storage is resilient and reliable. In fact, one SE always told customers that the storage was "bulletproof". This got the sales team thinking...was it really bulletproof? Could you actually shoot a bullet through the storage array and have it continue running? HP engineering believed it was possible and contacted National Technical Center (NTC), a ballistic test center, in Camden, Arkansas to run the tests. The staff at NTC has conducting many ballistics tests over the years but this is the first time that they were asked to shoot a bullet through a storage system.

HP engineers installed the servers and XP storage at the Camden site and started a video stored on the XP array. A small fish tank was placed behind the XP array to help illustrate the path of the bullet. (The lone fish swimming in the fish tank was humanely removed to a safer location before the shot was fired). A video was streaming on a monitor, fed by the XP storage. Then, a .308-caliber bullet was fired through the array and the fish tank. The video kept playing even though the bullet had left a hole the size of a quarter in all of the memory and logic cards on one side of the array. The fish tank, unfortunately, did not survive the experiment.

Memory and logic cards can and do fail within controllers. It is a very rare occurrence to have all of the cards on one side of the controller fail. It is an even rarer occurrence to have all of the cards on one side fail – in fact, this is the first recorded case of half of the memory and logic cards suffering from a bullet wound. Nonetheless, the test proved without a doubt that the XP storage system can lose half of its cards and continue to run without an interruption in service. The video of the shooting is available on HP's website.

Now HP is not asking customers to use their storage as target practice. In fact, HP is telling customers that this test should not be tried at home. (They do mention that no animals or humans were harmed during the test).

The test dramatically proves the point – the *HP StorageWorks XP12000* storage array deserves the title of *bulletproof storage*. Kudos to HP for a marketing campaign that is innovative and dramatic. We can't wait to see what you come up with next!



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About the Author

Dianne McAdam is Director of Enterprise Information Assurance for the Clipper Group. She brings over three decades of experience as a data center director, educator, technical programmer, systems engineer, and manager for industry-leading vendors. Dianne has held the position of senior analyst at Data Mobility Group and at Illuminata. Before that, she was a technical presentation specialist at EMC's Executive Briefing Center. At Hitachi Data Systems, she served as performance and capacity planning systems engineer and as a systems engineering manager. She also worked at StorageTek as a virtual tape and disk specialist; at Sun Microsystems, as an enterprise storage specialist; and at several large corporations as technical services directors. Dianne earned a Bachelor's and Master's degree in mathematics from Hofstra University in New York.

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