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Storage

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IDC Serves Up Top 10 Storage Predictions For 2008

Analysts see solid-state drives, online storage gaining steam

IT managers looking to boost storage efficiency next year will embrace online storage services, push de-duplication in the data center and adopt solid-state disk drives to help fuel hardware consolidation strategies and green initiatives, according to IDC's top 10 storage predictions for 2008.

The top 10 storage industry predictions by the Framingham, Mass.-based market research company expected to arrive in 2008 include:

1. Storage services models for data backup, archiving and replication will be more appealing to businesses.
2. New role-based storage systems will demand tighter integration between the storage layer and content-generating applications.
3. Vendors will build object-based storage systems to classify data and add policies closer to the point of creation.
4. Falling prices of solid-state disk drives will push mainstream adoption.
5. Virtual servers will become an ideal conduit for iSCSI.
6. Value-added storage services will become nontethered from storage infrastructure.
7. Full-disk encryption will be prevalent in the data center to satisfy compliance and safe harbor provision rules.
8. Offerings designed for small and midsize businesses featuring integrated storage and server technology will flood the storage market.
9. Green storage initiatives will cause companies to seek nondisruptive/partial hardware upgrades.
10. De-duplication, thin provisioning and virtual tape libraries will be in demand because of power saving efforts in the data center.

According to IDC, storage capacity is exploding at a rate of almost 60% per year. That type of accelerated growth is forcing IT executives to rethink what type of storage system is best suited for their data -- and to consider the costs in light of shrinking floor space and rising costs of power, said Dave Reinsel, an analyst at IDC.

Reinsel said he foresees 2008 as the year there will be many "toes in the water" regarding companies evaluating the benefits of solid-state disk drive technology in a corporate setting. He said this is largely because of the increasing importance of end users leveraging services over the Web, which requires faster response times and transaction processing. These tasks are a better fit for high-performing and flash-based solid-state technology than physical hard disk drives.

"There are very simple situations and application scenarios where solid-state disks will be worth the risk. It does promise some great potential benefit in terms of I/O," said Reinsel, who noted that high prices that have stunted solid-state adoption will drop in 2008. IDC predicts solid state will make a significant impact on reducing heat from spindle usage in server blade deployments and to boost functionality in mobile devices.

In the new study, IDC storage analysts said this year's top 10 storage predictions for 2008 address three areas: new data storage models such as object-based storage; green storage technology, which helps companies reduce their carbon footprint and energy expenditure; and new forms of storage delivery such as online storage services.

Online storage began its transformation in 2007 from a simplified backup option for consumers and small businesses to an offering that can enable larger businesses bolster disaster recovery operations, regulatory compliance needs and help curb storage infrastructure costs. Even Google Inc. is reportedly interested in building online storage technology to take advantage of the lucrative market.

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