

Vendors Aim To Replace Tape As Main Backup Tool

Offerings provide more flexibility for small businesses

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Several vendors last week introduced products positioned to replace tape in whole or in part as the backup medium of choice for small and midsize clients.

Harlan Blatman, solution specialist at Innovative Systems and Solutions, a Little Falls, N.J.-based solution provider, said having no-tape options offers more flexibility for his customers. Disk-to-disk-to-tape technologies are a no-brainer to justify, he added.

The possibility of actually cutting tape out of the backup process and just backing data up to disks is appealing to many customers, especially as hard-drive prices fall, Blatman said. However, he said, tape still plays an important role, since it can be taken off-site.

"You can take removable hard drives off-site," he said. "But if you drop one, you lose the information. Drop a tape, and just blow the dust off. But hard drives can last longer than tapes, so the difference between the two is a wash."

For solution providers considering options to tape, Data Domain, Palo Alto, Calif., last week introduced three storage appliances that it says speed the process of backing up and restoring data over IP networks. The appliances break data objects into small blocks and stores just the blocks that are unique, cutting down on storage capacity requirements.

Data Domain's entry-level appliance allows data throughput of up to 160 Gbytes per hour with a maximum usable backup capacity of up to 15 Tbytes at a price of \$19,000.

Elsewhere, Unitrends is offering an appliance featuring 1.5 Tbytes of removable hard-drive storage at a list price of \$9,995. The Columbia, S.C.-based vendor said its new DPU2000-1500 allows customers to archive data to hot-swappable hard drives for off-site storage, while giving them the ability to recover archived data more quickly than if tape were used.

Asigra, Toronto, unveiled agentless software that helps MSPs simplify their billing and service-level agreements for backup services by charging only for the amount of data stored and not according to the number of backed-up servers or desktops.

Milpitas, Calif.-based Adaptec, Boulder, Colo.-based Exabyte and San Diego-based BakBone Software also got together last week to unveil three packaged bundles for disk-to-disk-to-tape.

The entry-level bundle includes a Snap Server 4200 with 640 Gbytes of capacity, a 2.0GHz Celeron processor, iSCSI target management and integrated antivirus software. The tape portion is an Exabyte VXA PacketLoader with one VXA tape drive and room for 10 tapes. The software is BakBone's NetVault D2D2T software with a 12-slot license. The list price is \$6,500.