Spectra Logic Pulls Out 'Swiss Army Knife' Server

April 19 2007

Company claims that nTier is the first product line in the storage industry to provide a single platform for all of a business's archive and backup requirements.

Data archive and backup provider Spectra Logic on April 18 proposed a new angle on consolidation by introducing a kind of storage Swiss army knife: a multipurpose backup/archive/disk/tape server.

The Boulder, Colo., company, which specializes in products for Tier 2 and 3 storage, made the announcement to a small group of journalists and analysts at Storage Networking World here.

With virtualization software already a mainstream vehicle for improving capacity and lowering power draw, the next step may be for hardware vendors to begin building machines that combine purposes, yet utilize the same power stream.

The new nTier appliance, unveiled at the conference but not expected to ship until later this year, is the industry's first product to populate what Spectra Logic has dubbed "the new Archive and Backup Server product category." Time will tell whether or not this is simply marketing spin, or whether it eventually does, in fact, become a new market segment.

Spectra's nTier offers archive hardware, a file system interface, unified backup and archive management applications and the ability to logically search, categorize and retrieve archived information, Spectra Logic

founder and CEO Nathan Thompson said.

nTier is designed with SATA (Serial ATA) disks and integrates with Spectra Logic's tape and RXT mobile disk lines using a single management interface called BlueScale.

Up to 60TB capacity

The nTier single frame capacity ranges from 2 to 60TB of native capacity, RAID 6 protection and connectivity to both tape and RXT mobile disk. Multiple nTier systems can be racked together to add additional capacity exceeding 400TB in a single solution.

nTier hardware integrates disk and tape, as well as archive and backup software applications through a single management interface. It also offers high storage density, RAID 6 data protection of SATA disk drives, power monitoring for energy savings and the ability to incrementally add storage in the field as needs evolve.

nTier is modularly designed to offer investment protection for future archive and backup needs. Network interfaces, disk drives, processors and motherboards are all designed to be modularly upgraded, enabling customers to take advantage of new technologies as they become available.

"This absolutely is a cool new thing," David Hill, principal analyst with the Mesabi Group in Westwood, Mass., told eWEEK. "It'll take a little while for people to wrap their minds around it, to realize what it can do, but it will be a good thing for midtier-type businesses to take a look at."

Thompson said that other products on the market today are not built specifically for the unique flexibility needs of both backup and archive. "Only the nTier product line enables data to move to the backup and

archive environment and stay there," he said.

Pricing and availability

The Spectra nTier Archive and Backup Server will begin shipping in summer 2007. Pricing for an entry-level Spectra nTier500 will start at $11,995, depending upon the feature set and configuration.

Copyright 2007 by Ziff Davis Media, Distributed by United Press International