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# Market Roundup

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## HP's Open Source Integrated Portfolio

By *Susan Dietz*

HP has announced its Open Source Integrated Portfolio (OSIP) which is aimed at providing customers with an easy way to deploy a range of open source, commercial, and hybrid applications across Linux, Windows, and HP-UX11i environments. This is single-source accountability for integrated stacks, including HP Open Source Middleware Stacks (OSMS), and comes with global consulting and support services. The OSMS component includes three different aspects: Open Source Building Blocks (which include the JBoss App Server, JBoss Enterprise Middleware Suite, and Symas' distribution of OpenLDAP, Connexitor Directory Services), Open Source Blueprints, and Open Source Services.

For those who have tried integrating open source software into their organization the notion of open source can often become that of open sores. It's not that open source software is bad, but rather the discrete roll-your-own nature of most of the distributions is not an integrated component of a broader solution. Overcoming this packaging and ease-of-installation deficiency is certainly one of the goals of HP's OSIP. Although rival technologies or distributions can be just as useful, Geekspeak features prominently, and if a customer doesn't know what she needs going into the deal, its doubtful whether she could figure it out without a tour guide and universal translator. The bottom line for any platform is whether or not the thing actually works; however, if it cannot be easily installed, whether or not it would work is a moot point. We believe that the tried, tested, and true approach of these open source offerings will likely resonate with those who are interested in open source, but not in rolling their own solution.

Most open source modules are dependant upon an organization's IT department tinkering to make them play nice with the commercial software already installed. However, fiddled-with components are notorious for not performing quite like expected, especially if there's a mission-critical specific that is dependant upon smooth software integration. It's Murphy's Law. Therefore customers, for the most part, would seek to avoid the tinkering and thus favor more integrated and tested solutions. Any bits that can be wired together by someone else is one less thing for customers to worry about. When those bits also come with consulting and support services, so much the better. Luckily, HP has experience in building modules and can show customers how to work with the stuff; customers don't need to work it all out for themselves every time. The company also offers ongoing support of the integrated platform, so if (OK, when) something refuses to continue playing nice, HP should be able to fix it.

## IBM and STORServer Make SMB Backup EZ

By *Joyce Tompsett Becknell*

IBM and STORServer have announced a new STORServer EZ Backup Appliance, a backup appliance for small and medium-sized businesses. The appliance, which will be available in both entry-level and a more high-end, scalable model, will bundle IBM hardware and software with STORServer's software and be integrated by STORServer. The appliances will provide backup, archive, and disaster recovery capabilities. The high-end products will have come in three pre-configured bundles using IBM Tivoli Storage Manager for backup and recovery, prepared for disk-to-disk, for backup and archives with optional tape or disk for disaster recovery; disk-to-tape, with backup,

archives, and an online tape pool and disaster recovery to tape; and disk-to-disk-to-tape, which offers backup, archives, an online pool of IBM TotalStorage DS4100 disk arrays and disaster recovery to tape. Each bundle will provide full automated policy-based configurations for data ranging from less than one terabyte up to 10 TB for a single appliance. Multiple appliances can be installed and managed from a single interface. Each appliance comes with a three-year warranty that provides a single point of contact for technical support. The entry-level appliance will provide disk-to-disk backup for up to 2 TB of data. This appliance will integrate IBM's Tivoli Storage Manager Express backup and recovery specifically designed for SMBs. Customers will have the option to add tape backup. For all products, IBM Tivoli Continuous Data Protection for Files will be an option for those customers that need to continuously and instantaneously capture and save changes to files in real time. The STORServer EZ Backup appliances have received Built on IBM Express validation for products that incorporate IBM Express products with IBM Business Partner products to provide integrated solutions for SMBs.

For SMBs the important piece here is integration. One of our biggest issues with storage vendors is that they tend to think that by having really good kit and wrapping vague and intimidating marketing phrases around it (like virtualization and information lifecycle management) that SMB customers will magically find solutions to their business needs. Never mind that their business needs are rarely articulated along the lines of "I need an array of 1.45 TB to solve my business problems and may I have some backup with that?" Often getting the hardware and software working is a simple matter in comparison to the management software. History tells us that management software meant either a product that reported on the status of many speeds and feeds without really offering a systemic view, or it was a large, cumbersome product that was too big, too complicated, and too expensive for an SMB's needs. Happily, this is not the case with this offering. IBM and STORServer have provided two classes of products, each of which has a couple offerings within depending on the way tape and disk are used, and how much total storage is involved. These solutions are integrated, and STORServer believes they can get them implemented quickly as well. This may be the solution that gets SMBs who haven't yet invested in backup to make the leap.

This solution is an example of vendors working with their business partners to produce solutions where one plus one is far greater than two. In this case, IBM and its business partner, STORServer, have created a backup appliance from a range of storage products that truly gives customers an integrated solution to an important but potentially challenging and costly storage need. Broadly speaking, the two biggest issues facing SMBs are the capabilities of their IT department and purchasing issues. They generally don't have specialized staff, and they need easy-to-price, easy-to-purchase solutions that provide all the capabilities in one purchase. Express solutions from IBM are designed to address this, and Built on IBM Express implies further integration work by the business partner, in addition to their own products. If IBM and its partners can articulate this properly, we expect customers to take interest and this segment of products to take off like TopSeller and Express.

## VMware "Opens" Virtual Machine Disk Format Specification

By *Siamanto*

This week VMware announced that it is making its virtual machine disk format specification available, without charge with simple GPL compatible open licensing. The specification defines how the virtual machine environments it supports are formatted. This step is designed to allow software vendors and other interested parties to interoperate with systems utilizing VMware's virtual machine platforms. At the same time VMware stated that the company is committed to supporting any open virtual machine disk formats that become widely adopted by customers and that it is working towards the creation of open standards in this arena.

For those unfamiliar with virtual machine systems, particularly those commonly deployed on Intel/AMD servers running Windows and Linux, virtual machine technology provides a way to encapsulate a complete operational system and store it in a way that allows it to be used on a range of server hardware platforms. In this context the virtual machine disk format specifies the complete virtualized environment and describes how the various components are stored. With virtual machine systems now moving from the test/evaluation arena into areas supporting business critical operations, the administration of virtual machine deployment is rapidly becoming a major issue. Management of virtual machines is now a high priority issue impacting a wide range of operational systems management tasks such as backup and restoration of data, security, and routine operating system and

application patch management. The publication of the VMware virtual disk format should assist ISVs and organizations to bring the necessary management to VMware virtual machines to ensure that mainstream business applications deliver service to organizations.

This is a very intelligent move by VMware as it will likely enable the company to strengthen its links with a large number of software vendors that are looking to exploit the potential use of virtual machines as a mainstream business server platform. It also clearly articulates value to business users; for VMware to become mainstream, it is essential that it be simple to deploy and straightforward to manage with the management tools commonly employed by enterprises. It is also good to see VMware looking to help in the creation of true open standards in this space. VMware is certainly one of the leading providers of virtualization technology, but customers would like to be able to embrace as much “interoperability” as they can handle. Today virtual machine interoperability is a relatively niche area, but as the use of such platforms increases, this will become highly desirable. We encourage the various virtual machine suppliers to agree on a useable open standard with more rapidity than we have heretofore enjoyed in the standards creation process.

## Enabling New Workloads for IBM's System i

*By Clay Ryder*

IBM and 3Com have announced plans to offer the 3Com VCX suite of IP telephony solutions on IBM's System i, the first IP telephony suite designed to run in a single Linux on POWER partition on the System i. The System i IP Telephony Suite is designed to help clients take advantage of IP telephony features and the cost savings over traditional telephony while delivering the same level of reliability afforded by the System i. This offering targets the SMB+ market of 100 to 2,000 users and delivers a native, standards-based IP telephony and application solution using SIP (Session Initiation Protocol). Through its support of SIP and other open standards, 3Com IP telephony offerings are positioned to easily integrate with other applications on the System i to extend functionality with telephony features and applications, including unified messaging, audio and video conferencing, presence, contact centers, and enterprise mobility. IBM stated that it anticipates the community of System i business partners and ISVs will exploit this IP telephony functionality to deliver new innovations in collaboration and key business processing applications such as CRM. The first software products from the System i IP Telephony Suite are expected to be available by third quarter 2006. In a separate announcement, Zend Technologies has stated that the PHP scripting language will be ported to the System i as part of a multi-year agreement to deliver Zend's PHP portfolio of products and solutions to i5/OS. Included in the agreement are Zend Core for i5/OS, Zend Studio for i5/OS, Zend Guard and Zend Platform for i5/OS. The products are planned to be available for use later in 2006.

With these announcements, we witness another broadening of the potential market for the System i. IBM has been trying to shift the discussion away from platform heritage into the present and future; these two announcements are further testimony Big Blue views the System i as more than just an updated AS/400. Delivering a VoIP suite on System i makes strategic sense to us, and hopefully the market will respond in a positive way. With this suite, System i's consolidation story moves beyond that of “just” a multi-OS multi-workload server consolidation play to encompass telephony/communication consolidation as well. For mid tier organizations with limited IT or operations staff, bringing the established cost savings of VoIP alongside the traditional IT infrastructure within the holistic System i management environment could be a welcome balm in the ongoing quest to consolidate and simplify technology operations.

With Zend's PHP line of products coming to the System i, the popular world of web scripting will be natively supported in i5/OS; another feather in the System i consolidation quiver. Given the legacy of business applications on the platform, having modern day web scripting available should enhance the platform's value proposition as organizations would be able to deploy new Web applications or Web front ends for current RPG, C, C++ or Java applications residing on the System i. This not only furthers the consolidation story, but it preserves existing application investments while enabling new classes of workloads to be deployed to a broader Web-facing audience. Collectively, we believe these two announcements illustrate creative thinking with respect to enabling further consolidation in the data center. Despite System i's considerable prowess as a consolidation play, we still

lament the market reality where so much of the discussion around System i remains fixated on the AS/400 legacy as opposed to what this platform can really do. With these two announcements, we see further proof that Big Blue has no shortage of ideas on how to exploit the System i. We only wish more of the market would seize the opportunity to do the same.