Market Roundup

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IBM Targets Mid Market with New Clustered Solutions

By Clay Ryder

IBM has announced that it is investing in development, marketing, and sales-channel programs to deliver industry-specific HPC cluster solutions at the departmental, divisional, and workgroup level in the mid market. The initial vertical focus includes life sciences, Computer Aided Engineering (CAE), and finance. The initiatives include pre-architected solutions based on Linux and Windows Compute Cluster Server 2003 with support from IBM; a partnership with Microsoft around key HPC solutions that features four new benchmarking and tuning centers; the HPC ValueNet for IBM Business Partners; and a new On-Demand Test-Drive Facility. Working with Accelrys, IBM is optimizing System x and BladeCenter configurations for Discovery Studio, a suite of solutions for protein modeling and computational chemistry for Linux- and Windows- based environments. IBM has optimized hardware configurations for CAE applications from ABAQUS, ANSYS, Inc., ESI Group, LSTC, and MSC.Software. In conjunction with Microsoft, IBM is offering a clustered solution featuring Office Excel 2007 that will allow clients to use parallel processing on clusters, thus freeing up client machines from long-running calculations. The HPC ValueNet for IBM Business Partners that offers joint marketing plans and incentives; sizing guides with predefined cluster configurations for standard and enhanced configurations; accelerated delivery and competitive pricing through IBM's Express Seller program; and field support from IBM's Cluster Enablement Team. The On-Demand Test-Drive Facility provides customers the opportunity to test-drive their HPC applications in IBM's Deep Computing Capacity on Demand centers with access to over 20,000 processors.

When most think about HPC or clusters, thoughts of massive computing solutions come to mind. Seismic research, astronomy, financial derivatives calculations, etc. are just some of the conventional environments where clusters of high-performance systems may be found. While it is certainly the case that massive HPC solutions can be found doing these very tasks, the reality is that clustered computing can be applicable to a smaller-than-galactic-scale undertaking, something that might be akin to the needs of a mid-sized enterprise. This scenario should sound familiar as it shares many similarities with consolidation initiatives that a few years ago were solely considered in the realm of large organizations. Whether it is applying multiple physical resources to one workload or applying a single physical resource to multiple workloads, we see that the suitability of the technology is

ultimately dictated by business needs, not by any perceived aristocratic position of the technology. If server sprawl in the datacenter is the middle-of-road solution, then either roadside shoulder offers a more compelling value proposition.

With these initiatives we see Big Blue looking to expand the areas where clustering may be relevant for the less-than-Fortune-500 entity. By focusing on specific verticals that are HPC-cluster-friendly, IBM has the opportunity to stimulate demand through a pre-designed and tested approach that should translate into less deployment risk and reduced deployment time. Both of these are key considerations to channel partners and their customers. Another way to view this is that it is a more efficient way to deploy clusters, which historically have tended to be custom-derived or heavily integrated affairs. Scaling down the HPC cluster to meet the needs of the mid market may make available potential new customers that previously would have forgone a clustered approach due to the complexity, cost, and time to deployment. It might seem counterintuitive to be scaling down that which was designed to scale up, but we need to remember that business needs, not the technology, is what drives deployments. Given the computational ability of systems in the part, massive scale was the only means to garner sufficient processing power, but with today's more-powerful-than-ever CPUs, scale no longer needs to be massive to meet the business imperative.

Another nod to business practicality is the emphasis on Microsoft Windows Server Clusters, and the HPC ValueNet. Mid market enterprises have considerable investments in Windows solutions, and tend to purchase their technology through business partners. We believe IBM's focus on building out the ecosystem for partner-delivered clustered solutions, especially those with Windows as well as Linux offerings, is a wise move. Armed with the expertise that will come from the benchmarking and tuning centers as well the Cluster Enablement Team, channel partners may find themselves more comfortable with some new approaches to meeting the needs of their customers while knowing that IBM is standing in the wings to assist, if the need arises.

Overall, we are pleased to see the notion of HPC clusters being positioned as a viable alternative for the mid market. If IBM can successfully engage its channel partners to lead with and deliver these solutions into the mid market, we may see the emergence of another mainstream alternative to server sprawl. For a mid market firm, the opportunity afforded by server consolidation though blades with virtualization technologies combined with clusters for compute intensive workloads may prove tantalizing. To our way of thinking, the largest challenge will not be the technology, but overcoming current perceptions of what HPC clusters are about and cultivating channel partners' and customers' mindshare to reconsider how HPC clusters could be relevant in their organizations.

Coming Attractions for eDiscovery: FaceTime Announces Options for Search and Retrieval of IM, Web Conferencing, and Chat Conversations

By *Lawrence D. Dietz*

FaceTime Communications, a provider of solutions for securing and managing IM, P2P and Web-based greynets, has announced new capabilities to simplify search and retrieval of realtime communications for ediscovery and regulatory and corporate compliance regulations. By partnering with major storage archiving as well as email compliance vendors, the FaceTime solution offers cost savings through consolidation of logging, archiving, and auditing using a single platform. IMAuditor's new role-based administration capability provides specific access privileges and tracks the electronically stored information that each reviewer has accessed, which is crucial to the integrity of the compliance review process. An operational reviewer role can be defined to set global policies and perform extensive search and retrieval functions. This affords the ability to "audit the auditor" as well as to ensure that system administrators, compliance officers, and operational auditors have access only to the information and policy-setting controls relevant to their role in the compliance process. It also ensures that their access is tracked and logged. These features provide organizations full control over the auditing and retrieval process, saving time and ensuring efficient use of internal or paralegal resources.

In addition, FaceTime allows both IM conversations and their associated file transfers to be scanned, archived, tracked, and stored for retrieval and IMAuditor provides single-step recording and guarantees transactional integrity when archived to email/WORM storage including EMC Centera, Symantec, HP, Zantaz, IBM/Filenet, and Iron Mountain. These new capabilities complement the current IMAuditor solution, which provides enhanced

security and compliance including comprehensive malware protection against worms, viruses, spyware, and SpIM as well as tamper-proof, non-repudiated full capture, recording, archive, and auditing of all conversations and file transfers conducted over public and enterprise instant messaging.

Organizations have yet to realize the impact of the new era in electronic legal discovery. While the new U.S. rules of Civil Procedure were effective at the end of last year, the impact of early meeting requirements for the parties to agree on initial ediscovery production and strategy has been largely unnoticed... so far. Many attorneys for their part have to set aside their discomfort with technology to address how they can exploit electronic evidence on behalf of their clients. If their clients aren't able to produce helpful evidence, the battle may go to the more technically adept rather than cause of righteousness.

Sageza believes that IM in particular will turn out to be a very common electronic smoking gun. Employees who are chronic IM aficionados are generally unaware and unconcerned that their multiple IM conversations may be tracked by their employer. There appears to be an air of invisibility surrounding IM. Products like this one from FaceTime that can seamlessly work with storage products from leading vendors will make the job of litigation preparation easier for the astute end user. Organizations who move to grab the monster of IM while it's controllable will save themselves a lot of discomfort in the courtroom.

EMC Releases the Document Process Suite

By Clay Ryder

EMC has announced the availability of the EMC Documentum Process Suite, a comprehensive business process management (BPM) solution for analyzing, modeling, orchestrating, and optimizing a range of business processes involving people, systems, content, and data. The Documentum Process Suite marks the integration of the process analysis and business activity monitoring software gained from the Proactivity acquisition last year with EMC's existing Documentum BPM capabilities. Documentum Process Suite is designed to work seamlessly with the Documentum ECM platform to help organizations build solutions for their information-rich processes by supporting the capture of structured data and unstructured content to improve operational efficiency and then archive while meeting regulatory compliance requirements. The software provides end-to-end process lifecycle management, with capabilities to optimize process performance at each stage in the process lifecycle, from design and analysis through execution and monitoring. In addition, the suite integrates with EMC's capabilities for handling information-rich processes, including: front-end input and capture of paper-based content, e-forms for data input, in-process management of both structured data and unstructured content, knowledge collaboration environments, and back-end records management, archiving, and storage.

This announcement illustrates once again that EMC is not just a storage vendor, but rather an information infrastructure provider. Garnering improved efficiency is one relatively simple way to improve the bottom line in any organization, and BPM solutions, such this latest from EMC, can be an important part of efficiency initiatives. Eliminating paper, the bane of information management, whenever possible is an important tool in raising efficiency, but simply scanning and storing the information is not enough. Applying process management to information as well as storage management to the retention of said information is paramount for enterprises that seek to leverage the maximum value from their information repositories. By viewing processes across departmental boundaries in the context of collaborative personnel and applications, business managers can gain insight into their operations, or their portion of the greater operation, but more importantly identify areas of process improvements, again in the quest for enhanced operational efficiency. As departments and even external organizations increasingly work in a collaborative mode, the need for managing the business process flow and the associated information grows. Additionally, in some scenarios compliance regulations or competitive best practices dictate that a closer eye be paid to operational processes.

While there are other BPM solutions in the marketplace, EMC is in a unique position to be able to offer more than traditional BPM by adding ILM and storage management and capabilities from Captiva, Documentum Records Management and Archiving, eRoom, and Centera to the mix. We believe a holistic approach that offers process lifecycle management, information lifecycle management, and management of the underlying infrastructure that supports the information is a strategic approach that few can offer and is a key differentiator for EMC.

Wyse Technology's SecureSC Add-On

By Susan Dietz

Wyse Technology recently demonstrated at the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS) conference its new SecureSC add-on for healthcare organizations looking to secure access to shared workstations while protecting patient data. SecureSC add-on integrates with Citrix Password Manager and .NET smart card technology from Gemalto into the company's Microsoft Windows XPe thin clients, allowing healthcare workers to swiftly and securely access patient information. The form factor is a card and reader format. The add-on provides users with a secure single sign-on system for Microsoft Windows, Web-based, and hosted applications, while supporting the most popular ISO 7816 Class A and AB smart card standards. The new smart card add-on will be commercially available through Wyse channel partners in Q2 of 2007.

HIPAA regulations have made some aspects of healthcare administration confusing and even more exacting in its standards. At one point, some doctors didn't even let patients see their own records. As things have settled, though, hardware and software companies have stepped up to the plate and have offered some electronic solutions to the problem. Wyse's SecureSC is one such solution. Can this solution help healthcare organizations protect their patients' data? As it turns out hospitals are very complex IT environments. It is not uncommon for a single workstation to be shared by a variety of people: physicians, nurses, nurse's aides, pharmacists, etc. Marrying access to a physical device that one already has goes a long way toward ensuring that users have access consistent with their role. While Smart Cards have experienced varying degrees of success, integration with a couple of major vendors such as Citrix, Gemalto, and Microsoft makes a great deal of sense.

Over time we can see SecureSC being added into the security options currently offered to a variety of other industries. The U.S. Department of Defense is already issuing multi-function smart cards to military and civilian employees. Those under a high duty of care to protect personal or health care information, such as law offices and law enforcement agencies, may be ripe for role-based security if it can be implemented in a transparent manner. We can also foresee the technology being utilized in manufacturing plants that deal in sensitive products, like chemicals or DoD projects. Secure sign-on using two-factor authentication—a card and PIN in conjunction— seems like a good idea for any industry which has sensitive data, and although some are already using the card-and-PIN format, a little healthy competition doesn't hurt anyone. In fact, competition stretches the boundaries of what's possible in a good way.

However, we believe that Wyse Technologies and SecureSC are examples of the direction healthcare and their IT vendors need to move. This is an industry with unique data privacy and IT budgets and needs all of the efficiency and streamlining help that it can get. While we applaud efforts to help tighten privacy controls in healthcare, we believe that IT can't work miracles and won't be able to solve the problem of reading physicians' handwriting.

HP: Availability of Virtual Connect and a New Blade

By Clay Ryder

HP earlier this week announced the availability of Virtual Connect, virtualization technologies to simplify the connectivity and management of its BladeSystem c-Class architecture. HP Virtual Connect modules separate server management from LAN and SAN management without introducing another network or disturbing existing network topologies. Virtual Connect runs Ethernet and Fibre Channel natively and seeks to simplifying network connectivity and common server management tasks across the data center by enabling administrators to wire once and then add, replace, or recover servers on the fly. The company stated that Virtual Connect modules can reduce total LAN and SAN connectivity costs by up to 38% compared with pass-through modules and can consolidate cables and switch ports by up to 94%. HP also announced its first workstation blade for the c-Class blade portfolio, the HP ProLiant xw460c Blade Workstation. Powered by Dual-Core Intel Xeon 5000 series processors, the xw460c seeks to deliver a high-performance workstation experience while minimizing desk-side support issues. The xw460c is targeted at customers in the financial services, public sector, and manufacturing industries. The HP BladeSystem Solution Builder Program is introducing Blade Connect, an online BladeSystem community for customers, partners, and industry observers to have direct interaction, share knowledge,

collaborate on solutions, and set up meetings for further discussion. HP Services also announced the HP Virtualization Assessment Service, which evaluates server environments and recommends changes for improved ROI through IT consolidation and virtualization, as well as the HP Quick Thermal Assessment Service for HP BladeSystem, an analysis of data center space, power, and cooling resource requirements for HP BladeSystem deployments. The HP Virtual Connect Ethernet module starts at $5,699, while the HP Fibre Channel module starts at $9,499. The HP ProLiant xw460c Blade Workstation starts at $4,329.

From our perspective, there are many positive aspects in this set of announcements. The flexibility and simplicity of the Virtual Connect represents a substantial improvement on existing interconnection technologies available for the BladeSystem. While reducing the number of physical interconnections in the back of BladeSystem should be applauded by IT administrators, the impact should be felt beyond simple wiring, by actually improving the whole notion of virtualization and flexibility in the data center. By removing the existing one-on-one relationship between blades and chassis interconnects, Virtual Connect allows IT server managers to move, replace, upgrade, or generally manage blades without disrupting the network or storage topologies. At the simplest level, this could potentially remove the need to coordinate with storage or network managers whenever a server administrator decides to change out a blade. This can reduce the time and the human resource cost incurred to make a server change. Further, the virtualized approach is consistent with the larger issue of server consolidation and simplification. We believe reducing the physical interdependencies of IT components is a worthy goal for any datacenter, and Virtual Connect appears to have furthered this notion considerably.

Given the state of IT staffing in most organizations, there are precious few resources available for strategic planning and deployment. Despite the value proposition that blades can offer, sometimes organizations simply cannot spare the resources to undertake what would otherwise be a worthy endeavor. The new server assessment and thermal services should be well received by organizations that may be short on staff, but not short on IT challenges. Being able to illustrate to management the direct ROI possible through blade consolidations as well as the thermal/operations impact on operating budgets is a plus for HP and its partners. For many organizations, having access to this information may be the needed catalyst to persuade management to make the resources available, even for a short term, to affect a data-center refresh towards blade solutions.

Last, but certainly not least is the community aspect. Blades represent one of the fastest growing platforms of recent times, and one reason for this is the rich ecosystem of partners that have come together to support the architecture. The HP BladeSystem Solution Builder Program is an obvious driver of this ecosystem; the addition of Blade Connect could help enrich the community further by driving discussion and innovation around the BladeSystem. While HP may not as of yet have fostered an external ecosystem organizations a la blade.org, the Solution Builder Program is an important component in HP's blade strategy. By encouraging as much community involvement as possible around BladeSystem, HP stands to bolster its competitive position in the marketplace, a strategy that appears to be working.

Aligning With a Pioneer Can Make Sense: Postini Offers Google Customers On-Demand Services for Message Recovery, Content, and Threat Management, and eDiscovery

By *Lawrence D. Dietz*

Postini, Inc. a vendor of on-demand communications security and compliance solutions for email, instant messaging, and the Web has announced that it has joined the Google Enterprise Professional program. Postini is offering new communications management and compliance solutions to recover lost messages, control business policies, protect from threats, and comply with legal and industry mandates for ediscovery and production of email. These new Postini solutions were simultaneously announced with Google Apps Premier Edition, and are available as unified and on-demand services that can be deployed in hours. Postini is offering a range of communications compliance and management solutions for customers of Google Apps Premier Edition. They include message recovery, providing the ability for administrators to quickly restore accidentally deleted messages; centralized management of all user accounts, allowing administrators to centrally control policy and content; threat management, delivering world-class protection from a broad range of threats to critical business

communications; and archiving for compliance and ediscovery, helping businesses comply with legal and industry mandates to archive, discover, and produce electronic communications.

There are a couple of market dynamics at work that make this interesting. On the one hand many large organizations, especially governments, are trying to figure out ways to reduce their Microsoft commitments. And, while open source is usually considered the natural alternative, it is possible that a thin client arrangement such as offered by Google would make sense. By offering complementary products to Google, Postini is in effect attaching its star to Google and thereby making the Goggle offering more attractive by enhancing its ecosystems.

Sageza believes that the symbiosis of the Google–Postini relationship makes sense and that a growing segment of the IT marketplace will be attracted to a services or thin client approach over time. This movement would be stimulated if Vista performance or product integrity suffers in the next twelve to eighteen months. Our only negative is that sometimes it is in the best interest of the organization NOT to archive everything and to enforce a document lifecycle management policy that emphasizes the useful life of the document in addition to the legal retention requirements.