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Storage Selection Directly Impacts Business Continuity Implementation

How Does EMC's NEW Symmetrix DMX Alter the B/C Landscape?

By Charles King

EMC recently announced its new Symmetrix DMX series of high-end storage solutions to address the optimization challenges faced by high-end storage customers. This report examines EMC's recent products in the context of satisfying organizations' business continuity needs through flexible high-performance enterprise storage solutions.

Rising to the Challenges of High-End Data Storage

The sheer volume of data created daily by hundreds or thousands of enterprises should whet the intellectual appetite of theoretical mathematicians. Fortunately, large enterprises are less concerned with the mathematical theory underlying their business-critical data than they are in ensuring its availability to employees, customers and partners at all times.

The crux of this discussion lies in achieving not only data protection, but data access protection. Information assets are only as valuable as the expediency with which employees can retrieve, digest, and apply them to business concerns. The benefit of deploying an optimized storage solution is not simply to protect data, but to achieve previously unattainable levels of business efficiency through expanded access to valuable business information. As such, increasingly complex data environments demand storage solutions that guarantee business continuance amidst dynamic conditions.

However, subsystem/array performance can significantly impact functionality in high-end storage, and improved performance can help prevent unexpected workloads from impacting service levels and reduce the need for additional operational and management effort. When performance enhancements deliver time savings, they become catalysts for conducting business.

The EMC Symmetrix DMX Solution

Companies offering enterprise storage solutions should strive to deliver business continuance on three main fronts:

- Increased performance for improved data availability
- Decreased impact on dynamic workload environments
- Consistent service levels independent of application loads

As a veteran vendor of high-end storage systems, EMC has a unique perspective in providing business continuance solutions. The company's new Symmetrix DMX series, via a redesigned architecture tailored to high-end storage requirements, offers performance levels that traditional bus- and switch-based storage architectures cannot attain. The DMX series' Direct Matrix Architecture is designed to enhance data throughput, improving application response times and peak performance regardless of load. Attaining such consistent service levels

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amidst unpredictable activity bursts is a vital consideration that affords enterprises greater efficiency in conducting business.

The DMX series is 100% EMC software compatible, including local (TimeFinder) and remote (SRDF) replication functions, and the new DMX offerings achieve performance levels more than three times greater than the previous generation of Symmetrix. This heightened performance is especially important in business-critical applications that demand aggressive levels of service. In addition, the new Symmetrix DMX series provides a three- to six-fold performance increase in mixed-workload environments compared with the Symmetrix 8000.

Greater performance also translates into increased backup and recovery speed. Though tape-based backup and restoration solutions have a place in many companies' IT strategies, they sacrifice the speed associated with disk-based solutions such as EMC's, which offer performance advantages in areas including simultaneous processing of failover, backup, and data recovery. Such processes reduce the impact on dynamic workload environments and afford greater flexibility in managing enterprise information assets. Notably, EMC's Symmetrix DMX family is designed to easily integrate into customers' existing storage infrastructures — a paramount consideration that mirrors the product-level desire to preserve or enhance storage management processes.

Historically, even high-end systems have felt the pressures of satisfying demanding production workloads/service levels while supporting increasingly popular "background" activities (local point-in-time copies and synchronous remote copies). Systems battled over internal resources to "satisfy many masters," with many of the functions (splitting off a point-in-time copy) generating tremendous amounts of burst activity. The dramatically increased system-wide performance and data bandwidth offered by the Symmetrix DMX series allows customers to determine what operations are needed to satisfy their business requirements (i.e., more local replicas or additional applications remotely mirrored), rather than having the load on the system dictate levels of compromise. With the advent of EMC's Direct Matrix Architecture, any performance impact related to background activities is virtually unnoticeable.

Coupling this increased system performance and added configuration granularity allows customers to more easily leverage the consolidation capabilities of the Symmetrix DMX1000 and DMX2000. Add in the deployment and configuration options of the DMX800, and the new series provides customers the means to assemble robust, manageable, protected storage environments that make technical and economic sense, and are flexible enough to adapt to organizations' dynamic needs.

Realizing the Benefits of Business Continuance

Enterprise customers requiring high-end storage solutions understand the need for solutions that increase data access with minimal business impact. Daily application loads, backup procedures, recovery processes, failover measures, and related distributed storage management fall into the category of tactical business processes. Independently, they may help provide access to business information assets, but collectively they can fail to increase the availability of these assets. Only in the optimization of these processes, through precision performance enhancements such as those offered in the Symmetrix DMX series, can these vital processes help enterprises achieve the strategic data access levels they require.

Customers seeking high-end enterprise storage solutions that integrate high performance and automated management of distributed storage should explore EMC's latest offerings. The new Symmetrix DMX series should allow companies to achieve faster and more frequent access to enterprise data without sacrificing business critical processes along the way. Such promising evolutionary steps in high-end data storage introduce opportunities for attaining impressive levels of business continuance, despite the daily challenges of managing business information assets.

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