

New WAN Vaulting option takes Data Domain into branch-office backup replication

Simon Robinson, Sector Head
Storage & Systems
MARKET DEVELOPMENT
2 May 2006

Event Summary

- Self-styled 'capacity optimized storage' specialist Data Domain has introduced new replication capabilities that it hopes will drive adoption of its Restorer disk-based backup appliances, particularly in remote branch offices.
- Data Domain has been offering a limited replication capability for 18 months, and points to a 40% adoption rate among its existing customer base. But the new WAN Vaulting feature supports more granular, flexible and customizable replication options.
- One of Data Domain's selling points over rival offerings is that WAN Vaulting integrates with existing backup applications and process. It can expect to face competition from other emerging technologies, such as wide-area file services (WAFS).

The 451 take

Data Domain points to the fact that, up until now, the only economically viable means of sending backup data off-site has been to load the backup tapes onto a truck and move them to a third-party location. This has penalties in terms of the speed of data recovery, flexibility, reliability and security (especially when tapes are lost or stolen). Data Domain also points to the fact that significant demand for a better approach is clearly demonstrated by the adoption rate of its existing replication offering. This is backed up elsewhere: Avamar boasts high adoption rates of its replication option as well. With its new WAN Vaulting option, Data Domain now has the opportunity to further deepen and broaden the scope of its technology deployment.

Details

Data Domain has been offering its Replicator as an option for its disk backup appliances since 2004. The product utilizes Data Domain's Global Compression technology to back up data across WANs by cutting bandwidth by 80-90%, making it one of the first practical options for network-based vaulting, according to the company. Fault tolerance is also assured due to Data Domain's logging file system, which guarantees write order fidelity of replicated copies, it says. However, Replicator was fairly limited in its application. It could only replicate entire systems, and could only move data between identical systems on a one-to-one basis.

Data Domain says its new WAN Vaulting option features more flexible asynchronous replication alternatives, which it hopes will extend its appeal to a greater variety of users. Directory-level replication allows users to choose which data they replicate down to a more granular level. Data can also be replicated between dissimilar Restorer appliances and can be moved bidirectionally, and also in a many-to-one configuration. This latter feature makes it especially useful for remote office digital rights, Data Domain claims, where multiple smaller branch-office appliances can replicate to a single, larger datacenter appliance. WAN Vaulting is available as a software option, with prices ranging from \$2,600 to \$10,000.

Competitive landscape

Other data protection vendors have similar strategies around digital rights and remote backup by using data reduction to minimize bandwidth. **Avamar Technologies** and **ExaGrid Systems** both offer replication for backup, although Data Domain contends Avamar competes with the backup application. **Symantec** recently unveiled its own data reduction product aimed specifically at remote-office data protection, but this is initially a low-end capability.

Diligent Technologies offers data reduction for virtual tape through its ProtecTier product, although this has yet to support replication. **Septon** has similar capabilities in the pipeline. Another competitive angle comes from WAFS players such as **Riverbed Technologies** and **Tacit Networks**. Data Domain contends these are fine for relatively small data sets, but struggle in larger environments. Meanwhile, existing replication vendors are introducing data reduction capabilities to reduce bandwidth, but still have some ways to go, Data Domain claims.

About The 451 Group

The 451 Group is a technology industry analyst company focused on the business of enterprise IT innovation. The company's analysts provide critical and timely emerging-technology insight to clients at vendor, investor, services and end-user organizations – insight that aids both strategic and tactical decision making for competitive advantage.

The company's services include the 451 Market Insight Service, which delivers daily insight into emerging enterprise IT markets; 451 TechDealmaker, a weekly analysis service focused on forward-looking M&A within the enterprise IT business; 451 Special Reports, which are produced on a periodic basis to analyze key emerging enterprise IT markets in greater depth; and 451 Strategic Counsel, the company's analyst-inquiry program, which provides clients with direct access to 451 analysts. The company also produces via 451 Events periodic industry summits and investor conferences that address opportunities and obstacles facing emerging enterprise IT markets.

The 451 Group is headquartered in New York, with offices in key locations, including San Francisco, London and Boston. The company also operates Tier 1 Research – an independent division of The 451 Group, headquartered in Minneapolis – which analyzes the financial and industry implications of developments impacting public and private companies within the IT, communications and Internet sectors.

For additional information on the company or to apply for trial access to its services, go to:
www.the451group.com