TERiX **Maintenance Perspectives**
Ways to get more from your hardware agreements

Five Storage Maintenance Considerations
Specialized systems require special love and kindness.

Feb 1, 2011

Keep an eye out for typos.
Details at the bottom of this newsletter's content.

Lockers, safes, and treasure chests

Storage takes on a multitude of shapes and sizes, from Network Attached Storage (NAS), Storage Area Networks (SAN), storage arrays, tape libraries, optical jukeboxes, and remote appliances to virtually any other imaginable hybrid hardware configuration. Certain considerations apply to all of them equally when it comes to hardware maintenance in particular, and understanding these considerations can save big money on the IT budget year over year that could be spent on more productive IT projects.

Datacenter Documentation

Asset management is critical for all hardware components in the datacenter, and with storage it's particularly important to know what you have, how it's configured, and how it interacts with the network, servers, and other hardware. Unfortunately datacenter documentation tends to focus on server licenses, software and network config issues, a problem compounded when storage is a mix of tape and disk storage, intermingles live storage with backup storage, or is maintained by multiple vendors. Make sure your infrastructure is dictating how the parts are documented, rather than simply skipping critical storage-specific details because there's no appropriate column in the database for 'backup', etc. If your infrastructure documentation is poor, be sure you have a maintenance provider who can adapt to that or even help improve it where possible.

Human capacity

The wilderness of storage options means that the skillsets of your staff are a consideration when proposing any change to storage gear or to maintenance plans for it. The latest and greatest new storage arrays may save money on power but cost 20% more to maintain and twice as much on retraining IT storage staff. Make sure you carry out cost analysis all the way through when contemplating a storage change that depends on current staff using any non-current skill sets.

Compounded Daily

While storage and network speeds and feeds can be expected to uptick slowly but steadily over time, storage needs and costs tend to come in bursts and can quickly overtake the best plans and budgets if not closely monitored. Certain industries, including medical imaging, hosting and backup services, will continue to experience explosive intermittent increases in storage capacity needs. Any maintenance plan for the current year needs to permit that expansion without falling short, but also without billing you for services you won't be using for more than a year.

Virtualization Savings Aren't Automatic

Highly virtualized datacenters aren't immune to storage overgrowth concerns. If anything, the combination of a high need to virtualize with a low willingness to shut down unused capacity makes virtualized storage potentially more costly than standard commodity storage; the savings in power and cooling are offset by the expense of supporting and managing a large number of hibernating

systems. If you are a hybrid datacenter, you will save most by employing a multi-vendor maintenance provider who is best adapted to support virtual systems mixed with standard storage, rather than a single-brand OEM.

Huddled NAS-es Yearning to Breathe Free

Bad puns aside, there is a clear value in maintaining independence from any one vendor or service provider when it comes to storage. Generally speaking, large storage vendors are naturally concerned more about shareholders and share price - ie, sales - than the net expense of supporting customers. Many will charge punitive fees for legacy support as an extension of that concern, to encourage product sales at the expense of customer support. Customers are understandably unwilling to push data around from device to device without need, and relying on a maintenance company for maintenance and a hardware manufacturer for hardware is safer and generally less expensive, to the tune of 30% or more for many businesses. Third party maintainers have no incentive to sell product, so the conflict of interest is eliminated.

TERiX Computer Service is an ideal storage maintenance provider for businesses and IT teams that find these considerations relevant. Specializing in multi-vendor maintenance, TERiX relies on certified technicians and parts, offering high-end maintenance and proprietary maintenance management tools that save time and money, both of which can then be spent on more productive things in the datacenter.

Find Out More

If this seems relevant to your specific circumstances, or if you just want to find out more about third party hardware maintenance in general, please click through to our general information area on our website. A quick response form is available at the bottom of that page if you're looking for the answer to a specific question regarding covered product models SLAs or geographic areas.

Did you spot a typo?

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Elsa, Phillipines - Kiva Loan Recipient

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