

# Commentary

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## EMC Tips the Scales toward iSCSI SAN Acceptance

*EMC's offering of iSCSI on its CLARiiON line strengthens the general acceptability of iSCSI SANs. Organizations that could not justify investment in, or did not have the skill sets for, a FC SAN can now look to an iSCSI SAN to give them the basic benefits of storage networking by overcoming the limitations inherent in direct-attached storage.*

### Storage Networking 101

Storage networking in the form of SANs started off with the use of Fibre Channel to create advanced FC SANs. But a basic SAN — one that does not require the high performance and rigor of a FC SAN — is needed. Such a SAN must deliver benefits such as cost-reducing consolidation with less dollar and people investment.

And iSCSI is to basic SANs as FC is to advanced SANs. EMC, which already helps enterprises master advanced storage networking, now helps organizations master basic storage networking with its iSCSI-focused CLARiiON AX100i, CX300i, and CX500i offerings.

### EMC Helps Deliver the Tipping Point

At first glance, the announcement by EMC that the CLARiiON line now has the option of having iSCSI instead of FC connections would not seem to be very significant. After a blur of iSCSI announcements by a number of

vendors and the introduction of a number of iSCSI-supported products, what is one more? The answer is that both reputation and this particular product make a big difference.

EMC is one of the few companies that can deliver the “Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval” for a new technology. Those who may have waited or wondered about iSCSI may finally be convinced by EMC’s imprimatur. Thus, EMC has helped move iSCSI SANs over the tipping point into more general acceptance.

EMC also brings one of its mainstream array product lines — CLARiiON — to the iSCSI table. The CLARiiON line’s good reputation means that not only iSCSI SAN vendors but also SAN vendors in general will compare themselves to EMC’s iSCSI in sales situations.

### Moving to a Microsoft-based iSCSI SAN

The use of Microsoft Exchange and SQL Server databases continues to mushroom. Organizations are comfortable managing the databases that use those

products as block storage in their DAS. The use of an iSCSI CLARiiON array will enable the same block storage management, but with the consolidation and manageability benefits of an iSCSI SAN vis-à-vis DAS.

## **AX100i — iSCSI to Go**

The AX100i best serves organizations that have smaller storage requirements (up to 3 TB native — before RAID requirements are figured in). The AX100i supports up to 8 hosts that use the Microsoft software iSCSI software initiator. By gathering up the DAS that previously was tethered to each host into one shared SAN pool, an organization can gain configurability and storage provisioning benefits unavailable with DAS.

EMC designed the AX100i for organizations where economy takes precedence, so the AX100i is customer installable and uses cost-effective SATA (Serial ATA) disks.

## **CX300i and CX500i — Getting Serious about iSCSI SANs**

With the CX300i, an organization can have up to 17 TB native and up to 64 hosts that use the Microsoft iSCSI initiator. The CX500i offers up to 35 TB native and connectivity for 128 hosts. So getting the benefits of an iSCSI SAN does not mean that the SAN has to be a small one.

If needs should change and an organization would like to fit these products into a FC SAN, then upgrade services are available to provide investment protection.

## **The EMC Heritage — World-Class Storage**

Buyers of EMC iSCSI CLARiiON models typically inherit all of the benefits of their equivalent FC brethren.

Software is a recognized EMC strength. For example, SnapView enables array based snapshots that improve the backup process by increasing application availability.

Product quality and world-wide highly regarded service and support are additional strengths of EMC — whether dealing with EMC directly or through one of its channel partners.

## **Conclusions**

The imprimatur of EMC is another step forward in the legitimization of the iSCSI SAN market. Organizations that either could not afford to try a SAN, or could only justify the use of a SAN at the high end, now have an opportunity to spread the use of storage networking more widely.

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