

mass storage

TRENDS, MARKETS AND TECHNOLOGIES

> case study

THE VALUE OF STORAGE CONSOLIDATION

By Jennifer Lawinski

When storage solution provider VeriStor Systems, Duluth, Ga., bid on consolidating the storage environment at North Carolina Central University in Durham, N.C., it put its reputation and its money behind an EqualLogic iSCSI SAN.

The university was trying to keep more than 50 servers with direct-attached storage up and running. Student and faculty information were running on a variety of operating systems including Windows, Linux, UNIX and Novell.

“We needed to stop server proliferation and build a high-performance, scalable SAN for all applications, particularly for the Banner ERP system upgrade and Oracle database,” said Greg



anatomy of a solution

- ➔ **COMPANY:** VeriStor Systems
- ➔ **FOCUS:** Enterprise storage solution provider
- ➔ **ANNUAL REVENUE:** \$12 million
- ➔ **PROBLEM & SOLUTION:** NCCU was using direct-attached storage on its servers and wanted to create a SAN. VeriStor brought in an iSCSI solution, giving the university a scalable storage solution at a lower cost than Fibre Channel solutions.
- ➔ **PRODUCTS & SERVICES USED:** Three EQ PeerStorage Array 200E units with a raw capacity of 16.8 terabytes; BakBone NetVault with NetVault Shared Virtual Disk Library option; Overland Storage REO 9000 disk-to-disk backup appliance; VeriStor Professional Services: design, implementation and 24 x 7 support services.
- ➔ **LESSONS LEARNED:** The project was VeriStor's first installation of an iSCSI SAN with the university's Banner ERP software, a common system used in education, and the experience will help them generate business in the future.

Marrow, CIO at NCCU, in a statement.

VeriStor proposed the EqualLogic PeerStorage iSCSI SAN. Also in the running was a Fibre Channel SAN from a competitor.

The university went with VeriStor and EqualLogic.

“Ease of management, simplicity of installation, price points and performance were a fit for what NCCU was looking to do,” said Steve Bishop, vice president of technology/CTO at VeriStor. “For a lot of organizations looking to consolidate storage, Fibre Channel is complex and frankly intimidating to a lot of people. Most people are comfortable today in IT environments with gigabit Ethernet and IP and all of the components used to transport and manage that traffic.”

Therefore, when iSCSI technology is transporting data via standard gigabit Ethernet switches by standard IP protocol, it's

less complicated to understand, and in this case, less costly to architect. The initial deployment was three EqualLogic PeerStorage Array 200E units with a raw capacity of 16.8 terabytes.

Getting NCCU to accept iSCSI as a viable alternative to Fibre Channel SANs was a challenge for VeriStor—but one that paid off.

Since the initial deployment, NCCU has added six additional 5.6 terabyte PeerStorage Array 200Es to the system for a total capacity of more than 50 terabytes.

“The cost savings are not only on array itself, but on the infrastructure required to connect your servers to it,” Bishop said. While hooking a server into an iSCSI SAN requires an Ethernet cable, a Fibre Channel solution can require up to \$9,000 in equipment to attach each server, he said.

“If I centralize storage and I only put three of my 50 servers on it, I don’t get the value that I could have otherwise,” Bishop said.

With the SAN in place, VeriStor also provided the university with a backup and recovery system.

“The primary function of a storage system is to store the information; the next function is to make sure that a failure doesn’t cause loss of information,” Bishop said. “More impor-

tant, these days customers are looking for higher-level functionality, and in most cases we’re talking about snapshots, mirrors and remote replication.” These services come fully functional with Equal-Logic’s components.

After more than a year of partnership, VeriStor is pleased with EqualLogic’s channel programs.

“When we bring a partner into our portfolio, we really look for, first and foremost, products that meet the technology needs of our customers,” VeriStor president Ashby Lincoln said.

Successful channel programs get products into the hands of customers while keeping solution providers in business and Lincoln said that EqualLogic has been helpful in promoting both its product line and VeriStor’s abilities as a technology integrator.

“For a channel partner, it’s important that the partners not only have good technology, but they need to have all of the channel programs in place as well to help you in your ongoing efforts as a channel partner,” Lincoln said. “Two things really struck us very early with EqualLogic—both the product set and the programs that are required to launch a successful channel program.”



9 Townsend West • Nashua, NH 03063 • 603.579.9762
www.equallogic.com