



The primary goal of SAN implementations is to make storage management easier – which can only be done with the right management tools.

Why settle for a partial solution when you can have an affordable, easy-to-use, high-performance SAN with advanced features and management tools already built in?

THE KEY TO SAN BENEFITS: MANAGEMENT TOOLS

THE PRIMARY GOAL OF CONSOLIDATING STORAGE IN A SAN IS TO MAKE MANAGING YOUR STORAGE ENVIRONMENT EASIER

When you buy a consolidated storage solution, be sure that you have the tools to manage it – because those tools are the keys to solving infrastructure problems. Before investing, complete a thorough evaluation to ensure that the storage solution you select will improve IT productivity, not inhibit it.

WHY DO YOU BUY A SAN?

Your SAN provides a pool of storage that you can share among multiple servers and provision easily, instead of individually managing multiple disks on separate servers. A SAN can improve your system reliability, since your data is not locked behind individual servers. It can deliver advanced features like snapshots, load balancing, cloning, and remote replication to improve data protection and recovery. But the primary goal of consolidating storage in a SAN is to make managing your storage environment easier. Without the right management tools, consolidated storage may not be easier to handle than individual disks – and it could even be harder.

THE PROMISES OF CONSOLIDATED STORAGE

Most IT organizations are looking for particular benefits from consolidating storage in a SAN. They expect to reduce the IT workload and decrease disruption to applications and users. They hope to find a way to expand capacity online, to avoid the disruptive and time-consuming expansion process. Other SAN promises include snapshot capability for online backups and instant recovery, smoother utilization rates, and the ability to move capacity back and forth as needed. All of these functions are enabled by software management tools.

MANAGEMENT TOOLS ARE NOT OPTIONAL

A common misunderstanding for new SAN buyers is that the management tools are optional – a misunderstanding often found when storage hardware and software are sold separately. Budget pressures can induce managers to eliminate individual software tools, resulting in unintended gaps in functionality that impact the entire SAN. Only when SAN management tools are working with consolidated hardware do you gain the efficiency and value you wanted.

ADD-ON MANAGEMENT TOOLS – EXPENSIVE AND INEFFICIENT

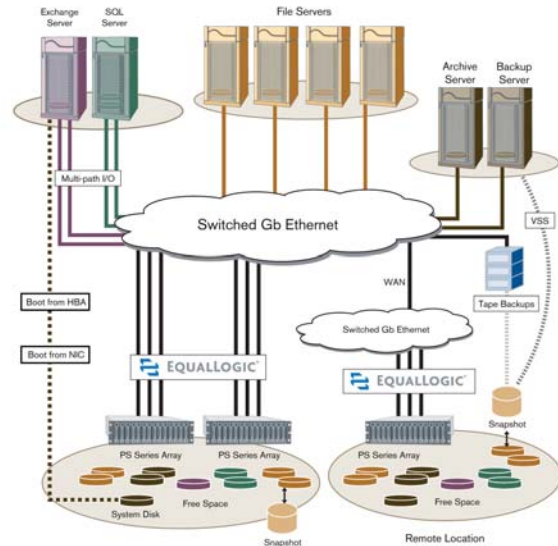
To reduce costs, some IT managers buy new storage hardware plus the one software tool needed to complete the initial project that prompted the purchase. For example, if improving backup is your driving force, you might buy the SAN hardware plus snapshot software. But what happens when you want to move onto the next improvement project – for example, remote replication for disaster recovery? With add-on management tools, you must initiate a new procurement process, buy more software (and often hardware), and then take systems down to install it.

There are other pitfalls and costs related to add-on management. Some solutions require you to buy a combined hardware/software management station. Others require you to buy software and install it on one server to handle storage management tasks. This can be a difficult choice – if you don't buy a management station you'll have trouble managing your SAN, while if you do, you'll lose flexibility as management tasks are restricted to one location. In addition, costs can skyrocket due to fee-based host software as you consolidate servers and applications. All these considerations can add up to more costs and less flexibility for your solution. So, while you can add functionality to your environment with add-on management tools, you still pay a price – in dollars, downtime, and disruption.

BUILT-IN MANAGEMENT TOOLS: A REAL SOLUTION TO YOUR PAIN

The good news is that there are solutions that take the worry – and the extra cost – out of managing and growing your SAN. With EqualLogic's PS Series iSCSI SAN, the management tools are all built into the array – not only tools such as snapshots and remote replication, but advanced features such as automatic provisioning, load-balancing, disk sparing, and multi-path I/O. There are no software licenses to buy, and

Consolidated storage with management tools



the tools are not only built in, but easy to use. Want to improve backups? Snapshots are included – you can improve protection and instantly recover data right from the start. If disaster recovery is on next year's plan, you don't have to worry about having the right frame and model of hardware this year – all PS Series arrays work together, and all have replication functionality built right in. So when you're ready to replicate, so is your storage. Worried about a disk failure? With PS Series arrays, a spare disk is automatically configured if needed. You don't need to worry about management tools – they're all there, built into the firmware of every array. It's a total SAN solution that makes your life easier right from the start and as you grow in the future.

So don't settle for a partial solution – easier management is what SAN storage is all about. You can consolidate your environment and improve productivity with a complete storage solution that includes the management tools to make you more productive, and your data more sharable and protected. And once you know what to look for, selecting the right solution for your environment should be easier too.

To view other Coffee Break Bulletins or to learn more about EqualLogic, visit us at www.equallogic.com.



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