



> product review



EQUALLOGIC SOLUTION MAKES SANs EASIER TO USE

Until recently, the thought of backing up business-critical data to anything other than tape was deemed inappropriate. Tape backup has a long history and a reliable, dependable reputation, but disk-to-disk architecture is taking market share from traditional tape storage and backup resellers, and is emerging as a viable competitor to tape backups.

One solution VARs should consider is EqualLogic's PeerStorage Array 100E.



PEERSTORAGE ARRAY 100E

- > **Company:**
EqualLogic
Nashua, N.H.
(603) 579-9762
www.equallogic.com
- > **Tech Rating:** ★★★★★
- > **Channel Rating:** ★★★★★
- > **Distributors:** Net One Systems, Nissho Electronics

NOTE: VENDORS CAN EARN UP TO FIVE STARS FOR TECHNICAL MERIT AND FIVE FOR THEIR CHANNEL PROGRAM. IF THE AVERAGE OF THESE TWO SCORES IS FOUR STARS OR GREATER, THE PRODUCT EARNS CRN TEST CENTER RECOMMENDED STATUS.

EqualLogic's goal with its new product was to make SANs more approachable and easier to use, and to offer products with wide feature sets at affordable prices. Even though this is a high-end device, setup and deployment were relatively easy and no prior education is necessary.

The device is a SAN that uses iSCSI as a transport and Serial ATA hard drives for data storage. The array comes with 14 hot-swappable drives and three Gigabit NICs. **The 100E is by no means a PC dressed like a storage array, but rather was designed from the ground up as a fully redundant and hot-swappable SAN, which includes all the necessary fans, power supplies and controllers.**

Though the 100E is designed more for primary and secondary storage than for backup purposes, the device is flexible enough to accommodate almost any company's needs. The 100E is designed for growth in an on-demand environment, and up to 32 arrays can be daisy-chained together.

When adding an array to the existing SAN, the arrays perform load balancing automatically. If an array is added in a single location, the arrays are automatically grouped together, creating a Peer storage group. The arrays are managed as a group instead

of individually, and the management interface does not change if an array is added.

Hewlett-Packard's NAS 2000 was the preferred client used by CRN Test Center engineers. The NAS 2000 included a Gigabit Ethernet adapter for accessing the disks created on the array. The array is self-contained as a SAN device, but a Windows client is necessary to see what the array looks like, and downloading Microsoft's iSCSI initiator is required. This can be problematic for operating systems that do not support iSCSI.

Once the array was set up, engineers added a 100E, and the devices were able to detect each other and load-balance online without disrupting any running applications. A 30-Gbyte backup load was automatically split when a second array was added, allowing 15 Gbytes to reside on each array. This capability is a great feature for companies that expect their data needs to grow.

Engineers also tested data replication by setting up two storage arrays to simulate data centers in two separate locations.



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Asst. Technical Editor

Reviewers were able to create snapshots and replicate them on a separate array, away from the primary data. When replicating data in two different locations, administrators do not have to exchange privileges to co-exist. Passwords can be left confidential.

EqualLogic's channel structure is composed of select large national resellers as well as

regionally focused partners that serve particular markets. The multitiered program is organized by quarterly revenue targets, and prospective solution providers must fill out an application to be admitted to the program.

Program benefits include co-sponsored seminars, advertising, sales literature, Webcasts, customer demonstrations, trade shows, giveaways and a monthly partner newsletter. In addition, a dedicated partner Web site provides access to an extensive collection of downloadable sales and marketing materials. Average margins range between 20 percent and 30 percent, and the vendor encourages customers to continue working through their original solution providers for service and additional sales.