

SCI StorInt™ Dispatch

HP StorageWorks SMB Announcements

HP announced on May 28th a new refresh to their MSA product line, their low-end unified storage line and a new line of virtualization solutions.

MSA Refresh

Earlier this year HP refreshed their EVA product line and now they move to the MSA product line. HP's new SAS JBOD or MSA2000sa G2 provides a direct attached storage solution while the new MSA2000i G2 provides iSCSI connectivity. The new MSA2000fc G2 rounds out the MSA with their standard FC array support.

With the new MSA2000 G2 series HP now offers a new small form factor (SFF 2.5") drive tray holding 24 drives. The MSA2000 G2 series also now supports more drives than the MSA subsystems; up to 60-large form factor (LFF 3.5") or 99-SFF drives. In addition, G2 allows up to a maximum of 255 LUN snapshots and supports more LUNs, up to 512. New support for VMware, HP-UX and Solaris was also released.

All the MSA2000 G2 products support the new SFF drive trays. HP states that the new SFF drives use 50% less power than the LFF drives and offers 33% more storage capacity per unit of rack space.

New Virtualization Bundles

HP is now offering three new virtualization system bundles an:

- **Entry** bundle which includes VMware Essentials software running on HP ProLiant G6 hardware,
- **Entry High Availability** bundle which includes the above plus an upgrade to VMware Essentials+ and adds HP LeftHand P4000 VSA (LeftHand software running in a VM) and a ProCurve switch,
- **Scalable High Availability** bundle which includes the above hardware plus an upgrade to HP LeftHand P4300 (standalone storage subsystem) and VMware Standard edition.

Such bundled offerings should make implementing server virtualization easier and make their low-end LeftHand solutions more channel ready.

Unified storage refresh

As an upgrade path for HP's All-in-One storage and PSS standalone filers HP has now introduced the X1000 unified storage (filer and iSCSI support). HP also announced the X3000, an upgrade path for previous PSS SAN storage gateways and PSS GW + MSA HA filers.

There are four versions of the new X1000:

- **Entry** – supporting 4 LFF drives
- **Capacity Optimized** – supporting 12 LFF drives
- **Performance** – supporting 8 SFF drives
- **Blade** – supporting two LFF drives

The new X1000 offerings increase file serving performance by 30% over previous offerings and combine file server, print services and iSCSI target support in one box. The X1000 supports file based deduplication and integrates seamlessly into existing Windows environments.

The X3000 has all of the X1000 versions except for the Capacity Optimized packaging. However as a gateway it can also attach SAN storage behind it and manage that storage as well as internal storage.

Announcement significance

In their announcement, HP's refresh of MSA, new low-end filers, and new virtualization bundles reveal a significant and continuing interest in the mid- to low-end data center. As for the low-end, despite the many startups, there remain only a few significant vendors interested in this space, which drives high volumes, albeit probably at low margins. Such a business is a great complement to HP's PC and low-end server business.

The continuing interest in SAS direct attached storage signals an ongoing need in today's data center for "storage without frills". This probably bodes well for Symantec, Microsoft and others trying to dumb down storage. The fact that HP is both advancing external storage functionality at the same time advancing JBOD capability indicates to us that both markets are significant and worth continuing investment.

Silverton Consulting, Inc. is a Storage, Strategy & Systems consulting services company, based in the USA offering products and services to the data storage community.