THE BENEFITS OF NETWORK ATTACHED STORAGE
SMALL- AND MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESSES CAN BENEFIT GREATLY FROM NAS, HERE'S HOW

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an EMC company

A network attached storage (NAS) server is a computing device that can be attached anywhere on your network, independent of network and application servers, to store files and make them available to authorized users. A NAS server has its own IP address, so it can be accessed by users directly, eliminating the need to use the network server as an intermediary. What's more, it's easy to install, configure, and administer – even with relatively little IT knowledge – making it an ideal choice for your small to medium-sized business (SMB).

EFFICIENCY AND RELIABILITY

Unlike a general purpose server, which utilizes a wide range of hardware and software to perform many different tasks, a NAS server consists of a streamlined operating system and specialized hardware and software components, designed specifically for efficient system performance. It is physically separate from your network server, which avoids bandwidth bottlenecks and allows the entire network to run more efficiently. Additionally, since the NAS device runs independently of the network server, the storage remains accessible during network server outages.

FLEXIBILITY

NAS storage can be used by multiple, heterogeneous clients and servers throughout your network, even those located in branch offices or satellite locations. The NAS device is a shared network resource, fully accessible to all users. As a result, NAS devices allow you to utilize storage based on each user's actual needs, rather than provisioning a specific amount to each user, which can lead to inefficient use of storage. You can also add storage at any time by simply plugging in the new server or expansion unit, or by adding new drives to an existing unit. Once recognized by the network, the additional storage will be immediately available for use.

EASE OF USE

You can configure and deploy most NAS servers quickly and easily, with little IT knowledge required. Because NAS readily supports heterogeneous environments, there is no need to configure the storage to work with a specific server. Instead, just insert the NAS anywhere on the network, assign it an IP address, specify a few environmental settings, and the storage is ready to go. For added convenience, most NAS devices utilize wizards and other user-friendly tools to make the process as easy as possible.

Many NAS devices are pre-configured to support such common services as the Network File System (NFS) and Common Internet File System (CIFS). As a result, NAS offers true plug-and-play capabilities that enable your server to be up and running in a matter of minutes. You can then monitor and manage storage from a central location using an intuitive Web-based management console. Through this console, you can easily view any NAS servers on the network, check the status of disks, track files and apply policies —from anywhere on the network.

DATA PROTECTION

Disk failures are an unfortunate reality. They occur every day, to all types of disks, in all types of environments. If your data is left in an unprotected configuration, a simple disk failure can lead to catastrophic loss of your data. With a few easy steps, however, you can initiate Redundant Array of Inexpensive Disks (RAID) protection for your company's business-critical data, to avoid data loss.

There are multiple levels of RAID available, each with specific tradeoffs between data protection, space availability, and performance. A good NAS device will readily support one or more RAID levels, and will include an intuitive configuration tool to help you choose the right RAID level for your SMB's needs. Once the NAS is configured for a specific RAID level, all files written to it will automatically follow the specified RAID format, and will therefore be instantly and continuously protected.

SOLVING BUSINESS NEEDS

Many SMBs lack the specialized IT staff required to manage a complex storage environment. When storage systems are difficult to deploy or maintain, or if they must be managed locally for proper performance, many businesses will manage their storage incorrectly or inconsistently, which leaves critical data vulnerable to catastrophic loss. That's why an effective storage solution for your SMB must provide a combination of reliability, flexibility and ease of use, along with superior performance and solid protection.

CONCLUSION

NAS devices offer SMBs a number of important benefits over alternative storage methods. NAS devices provide efficient, flexible storage that is accessible independent of a specific network or application server, which enhances overall network performance. In addition, the remote management capabilities of a NAS device make it easy to manage the entire storage environment from one central location, even if multiple NAS storage servers are located in geographically dispersed offices. NAS servers offer the ease of use and flexibility that your business needs, while providing superior data protection that it demands.

The Iomega® StorCenter™ family of NAS storage solutions blends award-winning EMC® storage and security technologies with easy-to-use configuration and management tools purpose-built for small businesses and remote offices. Learn more about Iomega NAS solutions at www.iomega.com/NAS.

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