

Delivering insights into storage, fuelling digital transformation

The far-reaching integration of digital technology within an organisation is fundamentally challenging all areas of businesses, changing both how they operate and how they deliver value to customers. So says Graeme Dendy, business unit manager for Converged Solutions at Datacentrix.

“In light of this, we’re trying to get companies to rethink the way they utilise their storage infrastructure, using it to gain practical insights into data that could allow them to become more flexible, highlight new routes to market, and speed up delivery.

“Today’s business challenges include shrinking budgets, new applications, and the hybrid cloud. Aside from these, there is also the current data explosion – 90 percent of the digital universe has been created in the past two years – which brings to the fore new rules and complications in the way that data needs to be stored, used and extracted.”

All of this data requires storage, Dendy explains. “And with a view to creating those efficiencies and allowing companies to manage their infrastructure better, Datacentrix is recommending that local businesses go the software-defined storage (SDS) route.”

The industry describes SDS as any storage software stack that can be installed on any commodity (x86 hardware) and/or off-the-shelf computing hardware, and used to offer a full suite of storage services.

Storage is managed and automated by intelligent software as opposed to by the storage hardware itself. The pooled storage infrastructure resources within an SDS environment can therefore be automatically and efficiently allocated to match the application needs of an enterprise.

“While we’re seeing the evolution of workloads, with the sheer volume of data driving to move them from private to public clouds (as well as to the multi-cloud environment), many organisations still have traditional infrastructure in place. These assets often hinder the adoption of transformation,” clarifies Dendy.

“Software-defined storage is able to run on and leverage commodity storage hardware, unify disparate storage technologies, improve data service availability, pool storage resources, automate core storage functions, expose programming interfaces (APIs), and augment storage architecture without interruption.



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Graeme Dendy, business unit manager for Converged Solutions at Datacentrix.



“Essentially, SDS can be used to optimise traditional application infrastructure to free up money and resources, enabling organisations to use these savings to invest in, deliver and operate new application infrastructure to run new workloads linked to the internet of things (IoT), analytics and blockchain.”

So, how do companies move forward, in a world where the rules that apply to traditional infrastructure and applications are very different to those governing next generation applications driving digital transformation?

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According to Dendy, a data-driven, multi-cloud infrastructure must be:

- **Flexible** – allowing for data portability between private and public clouds, supporting security and compliance, and allowing for high ROI use cases;
- **Modern** – native DevOps capable, as well as providing for API automation and self service; and
- **Agile** – being service level driven, software defined, flash optimised and able to deliver modern back up and replication facilities.

“It’s about control, having efficiencies and the abstraction of assets,” he adds.

Jonathan Tullett: research manager, IT services for sub-Saharan Africa at IDC, guest speaker at a recent Datacentrix breakfast event focusing specifically on digital transformation (DX), SDS, and its effect on the market, said that a tipping point for DX isn’t far off, and companies that are behind the door won’t be aware of how badly they are losing the race until it happens.

In his talk, entitled “Infrastructure realities of digital transformation”, Tullett observed that businesses must adopt a strong but flexible strategy, with the right partners to match. “It’s time to stop clinging to legacy ideas and to choose the right partner – legacy IT ideas are often linked to legacy partners. Flexibility and adaptability are critical, as they allow for the ability to adapt and integrate better.

“Organisations need to pivot towards a platform supporting DX, and not a framework dictating it,” he commented.

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