Putting file virtualization on the fast track

Today's storage environments are complex, inflexible, inefficient, and expanding…fast. As the volume of data continues to increase, businesses are actively searching for new solutions that will help them efficiently manage file data, while still keeping storage costs in check.

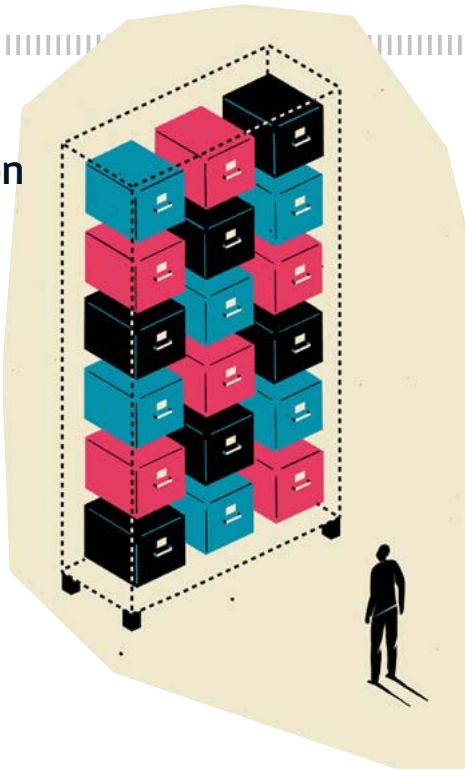
F5's file virtualization adds a layer of intelligence in the network, breaking the rigid mappings that tie users and applications to physical devices, and simplifying the way data is accessed, moved, and managed. IT organizations can move data at their convenience, place data at their discretion, and choose the storage technology that best meets the needs of the business—all without application, or business, disruption.

With the new F5 Acopia FreedomFabric Network Manager software, enterprises can deploy file virtualization across heterogeneous environments—even at sites with limited IT resources—quicker and easier than before.

The FreedomFabric Network Manager is the industry's first independent management platform for intelligent file virtualization networks. It combines innovative wizards with auto-discovery to simplify the configuration, deployment, and management of the F5 Acopia ARX series devices.

The FreedomFabric Network Manager auto-discovers key attributes about the Network-Attached Storage (NAS) and file server environment that are pertinent to an ARX configuration, such as volumes, shares, exports, security settings, file system settings, and more. Then, it automatically generates a configuration file for an ARX switch to virtualize the file storage environment. This process provides a simplified, standard workflow that minimizes errors, and significantly reduces virtualization deployment time.

After the configuration is loaded into an ARX switch, the file storage environment is virtualized, allowing you to manage unstructured file data without disrupting systems, applications, or users. The FreedomFabric Network Manager also generates file server inventory reports summarizing the file server configuration.



File virtualization solution offers virtual snapshots

The newly released F5 Acopia FreedomFabric Network Operating System v3.0 offers enterprises the ability to instantly create snapshots spanning many heterogeneous filers. Users and applications can have direct access to these federated snapshots for backup, replication, the recovery of accidentally deleted or modified files or directories, and many other uses. The process of creating the virtual snapshot is transparent to user workflow, and eliminates the complex, often manual, processes previously required to protect large file infrastructures. Even better, the FreedomFabric Network Operating System helps eliminate vendor lock-in by allowing organizations to choose technology based solely on their business requirements.

"Today, storage vendors offer snapshot technologies that are tightly integrated with their proprietary storage platforms," says Nigel Burmeister, director of product marketing for data solutions at F5. "Virtual snapshots by F5 Acopia brings snapshot management into the network and leverages intelligent file virtualization to provide intuitive data recovery with data center-wide crash consistency."

The new version of the FreedomFabric Network Operating System helps businesses simplify data protection in heterogeneous, virtualized environments; eliminate reliance on single-vendor technologies; enable intuitive data recovery; and provide data center-wide crash consistency. For more information on the FreedomFabric Network Manager and the FreedomFabric Network Operating System, please visit **www.f5world.com**.

F5 joins forces with VMware

Applications that run on VMware gain significant increases in performance, scalability, and availability. Extracting the full benefit of running an application in a virtual environment, however, requires intelligent and automated load balancing of the virtual machines. To demonstrate the benefits and deliver increased integration between F5 BIG-IP devices and VMware technology, F5 has joined VMware's Technology Alliance Program. This new relationship will pave the way for collaboration between the two companies by enabling F5 to leverage VMware application program interfaces and software development kits to integrate the two lines of products, participate in VMware's beta program, and offer joint support to customers. In addition to this new partnership, F5 has published a solution brief detailing the benefits and technical requirements for deploying BIG-IP Local Traffic Manager, BIG-IP Global Traffic Manager, WebAccelerator, and WANJet with VMware ESX, VMotion, VirtualCenter, High Availability, and Distributed Resource Scheduler. F5 has also launched a new forum on F5 DevCentral to showcase user-contributed iControl and iRule scripts, tips, and troubleshooting advice for F5 and VMware technology.

Illustrations by Keith Negley

There's a new ARN in town: F5's ARN for Microsoft Windows Server 2008

F5 and Microsoft have joined forces again, testing, documenting, and creating a new Application Ready Network (ARN) for Microsoft Windows Server 2008, code-named "Longhorn."

Microsoft Windows Server 2008 is an advanced server operating system, designed to power the next generation of networks, applications, and Web services. The F5 ARN for Windows Server 2008 will help enterprises achieve powerful deployment advantages, featuring support for the updated versions of Microsoft Internet Information Services (IIS) and Terminal Services, as well as Microsoft technologies such as Windows PowerShell and Secure Socket Tunneling Protocol (SSTP).

Building on previously announced ARNs for Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007, Exchange Server, and Office Communications Server 2007, F5 is the only Application Delivery Networking provider to offer validated, application-specific solutions to optimize end-to-end performance, availability, and scalability for key Microsoft applications. With ARN, F5 delivers the industry's most comprehensive application-specific products, tools, templates, and deployment guides to reduce the costs associated with application deployment, management, and operation. F5's ARN offers step-by-step deployment guidance to help facilitate cooperation across organizations' application and networking groups, reducing the risk of missed deployment deadlines, over-budget projects, and failed or poorly adopted application deployments. For more information on the ARN for Windows Server 2008, visit **www.f5world.com**.

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