Research Preview

Aberdeen Group
A Harte-Hanks Company

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Virtualization & Business Continuity: Are You Protected?

AberdeenGroup research shows that 31 percent of organizations surveyed have virtualization deployed within their IT infrastructure. The same research also shows that virtualization has strong adoption rate, largely due to companies' need to cut costs through server consolidation and resource flexibility. About fifty percent of companies surveyed either have deployed or plan to evaluate some virtualization solutions. However, it was only a matter of time before a red flag was raised about how these new logical environments are going to be secured for high availability, disaster recovery and business continuity. Bottom line, end users need to start thinking not only about using virtualization for high availability and disaster recovery but also, about how to protect their newly virtualized environments.

Aberdeen's Hypothesis

To alleviate the business continuity with virtualized environments challenge, Aberdeen Group believes more companies need to adapt their virtualized server and storage environments for high availability, disaster recovery and business continuity business/operational needs.

Companies should give a deep consideration whether they want to adopt a targeted technology and implement a strategy that will enable them to take advantage of improving storage utilization rates, improving server utilization rates, and at the same time minimize unplanned downtime, reduce business/financial risk of disaster and improve the high availability of their operation.

Best in Class PACE Hypothesis

Open systems virtualization is poised to be the defining technology this year, and it is on course for stronger adoption as customers try to ease their data center headaches. Business drivers such as server consolidation, disk capacity, CPU utilization and a general need to reduce costs are pushing customers to turn to virtualization as a remedy. In a recent benchmark report titled, "Justifying the Cost of Uptime: Server and Storage Virtualization", AberdeenGroup found that companies are not just implementing virtualization in their testing environments, but they have moved forward with deployments in their production environments as well. (Ref. Figure1)

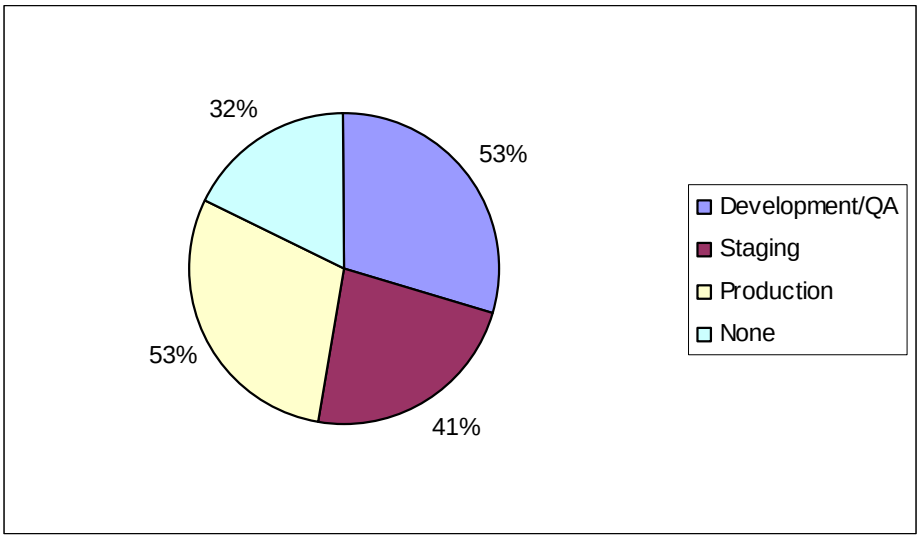
How to Participate in the Study

If your company:

- √ Has virtualized environment
- √ Protects its digital data
- √ Uses or needs to use BC & DR data protection methodology

Contact us now to get involved in this study!

Figure 1: Where Customers are Using Virtualization



Source: Aberdeen Group, September 2006

Table 1: Best-in-Class PACE Hypothesis

Pressures (Top 1)	Actions (2)	Capabilities (3-5)	Enablers (4-6)
Potential loss of business & financial risk with unprotected environment in case of disaster	Select a solution that has minimal impact to the legacy infrastructure	Application/data server clustering (active/multi-nodal)	Virtualizing storage under management
	Implement virtualization and move into a flexible infrastructure topology, application and storage alike	Business continuity incorporated into overall risk management policy	Virtualizing servers throughout the organization
		Disaster recovery included in overall risk management policy	Disk-based multi-tiered storage
			Replication based data protection solution
			Resource management & monitoring tools

The performance metrics which will be used to determine best-in-class are:

Metric Name	Measurable Values
Data & Application high-availability	How much increase in high-availability of application and data across the organization
Recovery of critical applications/data, Time Objective	How often the organization meet their own set RTOs
Recovery of critical applications/data, Point Objective	How often the organization meet their own set RPOs
Improvement in recovery time	How long does it take on average to recover a corrupted/missing piece of data
Reduction in staff overhead	How much of a reduction

Other metrics to be used:

- User satisfaction
- Management effectiveness

Cases in Point

Myra Systems is helping change the way companies reshape their data protection practices, especially when it comes to environment virtualization. The Vancouver, BC-based company provided information technology (IT) solutions and technology infrastructure services focused on support, design, planning and implementation to their customers. "Virtualization is about managing fewer physical machines, fewer operating systems and needing less labor. Server virtualization is about savings, but storage virtualization is not about savings. It's more about flexibility" says John Murphy, Myra's CEO. Myra provides consulting services as well as deliverable-based services, including project management, business IT consulting and technical expertise. We specialize in supporting businesses that use UNIX, Windows, networks and related technologies.

Archstone Consulting is an example of how some companies are changing their data protection practices, especially when it comes to business continuity strategy. The Stamford CT-based company uses a SAN based IT infrastructure in their own HQ data center. "In order to move virtual machines seamlessly from one server to another, you need to have a Storage Area Network" says Mike Fuller, a manager for Archstone. The company has recently successfully deployed virtualization SW/applications supported by their Storage Area Network (SAN) based environment.

Research Methodology

Our research will test to determine whether best-in-class companies have a defined way of combing BC and DR concepts with their virtualized environments. Whether organizations that virtualize more of their servers and data storage infrastructures, ultimately benefit from increased utilization of their IT resources. And, now that companies have turned their server and storage infrastructures into virtual environments, what comes next? The focus will be on retooling the high availability, disaster recovery and business continuity strategies for these virtual environments. This should improve the company's overall ability to recover its critical applications and data on a year-over-year, basis. Companies who adopt AberdeenGroup's Best-in-Class practices should experience reductions in capital and maintenance costs.

Solution Snapshot

The following is a partial list of vendors in this space:

- Acopia
- Acronis
- Attune Systems
- Brocade
- CA / XOsoft
- Cassatt
- Cisco
- Copan Systems
- DataCore Software
- DataSynapse
- Diligent Technologies
- DoubleTake Software
- Egenera
- EqualLogic
- Evault (Seagate)
- FalconStor
- Forsythe
- F5 Networks
- Hewlett Packard
- Hitachi Data Systems
- IBM
- Integra Networks Corp.
- LeftHand Networks
- Marathon Technologies
- Microsoft
- Mt Xia
- Network Appliance
- Neverfail
- Platespin
- Sepaton
- SWsoft
- Transitive
- 3Par
- Virtual Logix
- Virtuozzo
- Vizioncore
- XenSource/Citrix
- Scalent Systems
- Symantec/Veritas
- SunGard
- Sun Microsystems
- VMWare / EMC
- Vision Solutions/Steeleye
- Virtual Iron

For more information on this or other research topics, please visit www.aberdeen.com

Or contact: Gerrald Smith, Business Development

Aberdeen*Group*, a Harte-Hanks Company
260 Franklin Street | Boston | Massachusetts | 02110
617.854.5217 (O) | 603.769.1041(M) | 617.723.7897 (F)

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Related Research

Justifying the Cost of Uptime: Server and Storage Virtualization, published March 2007

Data Protection and Recovery Management, to be published July 2007

Author: Avner Kedmi, Director, Data Management & Storage; avner.kedmi@aberdeen.com

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