

Beyond the Rev-up

The very fact that the biggies too offered IP SAN solutions spoke of the tech's growing acceptability—and demand

Perhaps the biggest argument in favor of IP SAN is that open, standards-based technologies will gain acceptability. IP SAN proponent Intransa says it grew 100 percent quarter-over-quarter in Q1 2005.

It adds that IP SAN-based networked storage has grown in stature and is being observed by many end users.

The company has taken active initiatives to push IP SAN usage in the country. Among other things, it organized road shows along with its partners to educate customers about the benefits of IP SAN.

Intransa launched StorAR, the asynchronous remote replication solution, which it claims provides unlimited distance replication on IP SAN for all applications.

The company also launched IP7500, the 40 plus TB IP SAN in a rack for online storage consolidation on data centre applications.

NetApp has been able to experience success in India

despite a relatively shorter stint here. The company attributes this to its ability to partner well with other industry leaders to provide comprehensive storage solutions. One such solution was the IP SAN solution for HDFC Standard Life, which is a joint solution with FileNet.

Network Appliance says that iSCSI is enabling enterprise customers to reduce their server connectivity costs from an average of \$10–15000 per server (fiber channel) to less than \$2000. Also, disk-based backup and DR is growing at a tremendous pace as it reduces the bottlenecks of tape-based backup and expensive DR options.

As a result, the company sees IP SANs serving its growth objectives in India.

IBM too recognizes that IP SANs were being adopted widely due their lower price points. On the iSCSI SAN space, IBM offered DS300—an entry-level product at an attractive price-performance for workgroup applications.

It says it had launched an iSCSI product as early as FY 2001–02 to test the marketplace and has re-launched it as DS 300.

However, a large number of enterprises asked for FC SAN as a reliable network storage system for their mission-critical applications. So, contrary to the perception otherwise, FC SANs were widely deployed during FY 2004–05. In fact, industry and market

sources pointed out that FC SANs constituted more than two-thirds of the overall SAN market in India during FY 2004–05.

Nevertheless, the overall IP SAN market has definitely grown substantially over the previous year, even though iSCSI's share of the total SAN market is not the dominant one.

Who Can Benefit...

Organizations that haven't yet implemented any kind of networked storage, or have implemented only NAS, would see a lot of sense in maintaining a common networking infrastructure to server their file-based and block-based data. For them, iSCSI offers an excellent value proposition. For other large enterprises, who have already implemented FC SANs in their datacenters, it would co-exist with the FC SANs and complement them. An organization like a bank may choose to run its core banking applications on FC SAN and run all mid-sized and smaller databases on iSCSI. Almost all organizations would see value in an iSCSI SAN as it helps achieve tremendous RoI. The complexity of implementing an FC SAN makes it an extremely expensive proposition. That is the reason why in spite of its great benefits FC has been limited to datacenters. iSCSI attempts to solve many of these problems. It leverages on two standard protocols—SCSI and IP—to create another standards-based protocol. The iSCSI protocol has been ratified by the IETF as a standard and therefore it attempts to eliminate all compatibility issues.

