



Instant Insight
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EMC Announces Major Product Updates

By Clay Ryder

EMC has announced new versions of its high-end Symmetrix DMX-3 system, mid-tier CLARiiON CX3 UltraScale series system, EMC Disk Library virtual tape library system, and Celerra NS series IP system, all of which seek to serve as the underpinnings of an Information Lifecycle Management (ILM) infrastructure. The updated storage systems feature the latest advanced technology to offer organizations state of the art functionality combined with integrated, single-source service and support. Key products announcements include:

- ◇ The Symmetrix DMX-3 model 950, a new entry point into high-end storage that features up to 70% improved power efficiency than alternatives through densely packaged capacity, performance, and functionality. It includes full DMX-3 capabilities and is targeted at space- and power-constrained data centers and as part of a business continuity strategy using EMC SRDF (synchronous and asynchronous) remote data mirroring solutions.
- ◇ A combined Fibre Channel/iSCSI capability for the new end-to-end 4GB/s CLARiiON CX3 UltraScale systems, which provides up to 49% more iSCSI performance and 74% more Fibre Channel performance in combined environments than alternative systems.
- ◇ The new EMC Navisphere Quality of Service Manager software, which enables allocation of CLARiiON resources to meet application service levels, as well as featuring a wizard-based management tool to ease configuration of the array while reducing the number of common configuration steps by up to 70%.
- ◇ The third generation of the EMC Disk Library, which leverages the power of CLARiiON CX3 UltraScale series systems to double the performance of previous models.
- ◇ New models of the Celerra NS series IP systems, namely, the Celerra NS40, NS40G (Gateway) and NS80 and NS80G systems using next-generation EMC blade server technology for improved performance, scalability, and availability over standard filers.

Pricing/Availability

The Symmetrix DMX-3 950 model, CLARiiON CX3 UltraScale FC/iSCSI systems, Celerra NS40 systems, and the new NSX system are available immediately. The Celerra NS80 systems and new EMC Disk Library will be available in November 2006. New software for the CLARiiON CX3 UltraScale FC/iSCSI systems will become available in December 2006. Pricing details were not announced.

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The folks in Hopkinton clearly have been busy and today's announcements reflect that. While there are many different aspects to the spate of announcements made, there are some common themes that shed light on EMC's view of storage today, tomorrow, and in the future. There are plenty of incremental and not so

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incremental improvements in capacity, capability, and performance which could be viewed as simply maintaining a competitive position; however, we see more taking place than just that.

EMC has been on a buying spree, and has gobbled many complementary firms over the past few years with varying degrees of integration of the acquired technologies. But recently we have started to see some new proof points that there is much going on under the covers to integrate and leverage the $1 + 1 = 3$ nature of these acquisitions. As this process continues moving forward we see improvements in capability and price/performance, but also interesting enhancements such as the Navisphere software with the new configuration wizard. It might be easy to chalk this up as simply an ease of use improvement; however, it actually illustrates further movement towards automation at the configuration level. Given that the rote and mundane are breeding grounds for boredom and oversight, we see this application of a wizard to exactly the right approach: automate and checklist as much as possible so as to minimize human error, but also save the humans for mentally challenging endeavors.

Further, with the Navisphere Quality of Service Manager, organizations can continue moving towards a service-driven infrastructure that matches application and storage performance with desired levels of resource expenditure. This, combined with the latest CLARiON systems supporting Fibre Channel and iSCSI, allows organizations to create two-tiered storage environments using Fibre connectivity for the highest performance while taking advantage of the low-cost nature of iSCSI for second-tier storage. This permits consolidation of servers through iSCSI that do not require Fibre Channel to eliminate islands of direct-attached storage, and to improve utilization and flexibility in resource allocation while also taking advantage of Virtual LUN technologies to easily move data between the tiers as warranted by service-level agreements. Thus organizations can recoup more value from their existing investments while making additional incremental investments, something that we believe would be pleasing to many an IT director.

With the latest Symmetrix announcement we are treated to incremental as well as non-incremental improvements. While there is little question that the Symmetrix product line represents the high end of storage capacity, capability, and foresight, the model 950 offers a new entry point into this solution. The latest update to Symmetrix Management Console, V5.3, provides new device management, SRDF family monitoring tools, and enhanced security controls; all the kinds of continuing incremental improvements to product line that we would expect. However, a more revolutionary improvement is the compact nature of the model 950. This may make it possible for organizations that are severely limited in physical data center capacity to be able to locate a Symmetrix solution, with all of the standard features, where they may not have been able to in the past.

At the same time, the model 950 also addresses the other issue data centers are facing; namely, the limitations on power consumption and cooling. Some might take the position that if an organization needs the performance of a Symmetrix then it can afford the data center to support it, but we find this point of view limiting. While an organization might not buy a model 950 just because it is power-efficient, the efficiency is a differentiator that should not be overlooked, especially if the organization in question is, in fact, large and reaching the limits of its physical plant. Whether or not the marketplace (through high prices) continues to make energy consumption an issue, it has caught the attention of regulators in more than one locale. Hence, what is presently a differentiator could quickly become a requirement.

Similarly, with the other announcements of today, we are pleased to see EMC not only push the envelope with performance, but also add capabilities that seek to help leverage its existing and future offerings by providing new software functionality to improvement management and operational experience. The company appears to understand that a one-size-fits-all approach, be it for performance, physical size, connectivity options, or configuration will not adequately serve the needs of today's organizations. With this collection of announcements we see clear proof that while the acquisitions continue, the basic R&D efforts of existing offerings have not waned as the company continues to press itself to maintain a leading position in the information storage and management marketplace.