



What's New

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iSCSI a quick fix for insurance firm

By Lucas Mearian

When Safeco Corp.'s business-insurance division almost ran out of available storage capacity on three Compaq ProLiant servers last fall, a storage-area network (SAN) consolidation project that would give the machines additional resources was still more than six months away. iSCSI turned out to be a quick, but scalable, fix.

The native iSCSI device that the insurance and financial services firm installed consists of an appliance with proprietary storage software that IP SAN appliance start-up StoneFly Networks Inc. developed and attached to an array of Advanced Technology Attachment-based disk drives made by Nexsan Technologies Inc. in Woodland Hills, Calif.

Joe Stocker, a network coordinator at Safeco, said using an iSCSI array saved him about \$25,000 compared with the cost of a typical low-end network-attached storage device. And once the SAN project is completed, Safeco will be able to connect the iSCSI device to a higher-end Fibre Channel array made by EMC Corp., he added. "So the investment in a crunch actually wasn't a throwaway investment," Stocker said.

Safeco has also reaped some unexpected benefits, according to Stocker. For example, data backup performance is three times faster than it was with the direct-attached storage devices on the ProLiant servers, he said.

The installation process involved putting a storage network adapter into each of the servers and then loading a software driver that let them begin copying data to the StoneFly array, Stocker said.