

Nexsan Shifts Back Paradigm To Disk

■ By Deni Connor

Nexsan next week is expected to roll out new disk-to-disk backup hardware for enterprises that are re-evaluating the way in which they perform backups.

The InfiniSAN ATABeast is a multi-terabyte disk array that uses inexpensive Advanced Technology Attachment (ATA) drives to act as a media for backup data or as a staging area for data that will be later backed up to tape. It has a 13.4 terabyte capacity and is contained in a 4U (7-inch) high chassis.

The ATABeast is meant to serve as an alternative to slower, less reliable tape drives and for storing data from a variety of applications such as digital video that are capacity-intensive. In the ATABeast, up to 42 drives can be continuously writing data to disk. The device features dual high-performance 2 G-bit/sec. Fibre Channel adapters for attachment to disk storage. It also features dual Ultra160 SCSI ports for host computers and supports RAID 0, 4 and 5 for fault-tolerance.

The InfiniSAN ATABeast is managed from a Web-based interface over a standard 10/100M-bit/sec Ethernet port.

Nexsan is not the first vendor to use ATA drives for backup to tape. Integrated Drive Electronics (IDE) and ATA drives, commonly used in desktop PCs, are attractive as backups for network-attached storage devices because they are getting closer in cost to tape, which is less expensive, and their recovery capabilities are almost 100 times as fast.

According to industry observers, IDE/ATA drives cost about \$8,000 to \$10,000 per terabyte, while tape ranges from \$3,000 to \$10,000 per terabyte for storage access that is as much as 100 times slower.

A Nexsan ATABeast with 13 terabytes capacity starts at under \$40,000. Nexsan expects it to be available in December. ■