

## ESG reveals new findings of VTL usage

Apr 3, 2007 -- The Enterprise Strategy Group (ESG), an analyst firm focused on information storage, security and management, has revealed findings on VTL (virtual tape library) usage in its new research report, titled "VTL Adoption and Market Trends". The new ESG research has found that VTL users are moving towards a tape-less data protection environment. The new report also found that VTL solutions improve backup and recovery performance, reduce tape media management issues and are easy to deploy, ESG said last week.

The report examines organizations' current disk-based backup and recovery activity and habits, besides analyzing the adoption and market trends specific to VTL, which is a software or appliance based technology designed to make a disk-based storage array emulate a tape library, ESG of Milford, Massachusetts said. VTL is commonly deployed for data protection applications such as backup and recovery, ESG said. The report also provides insight into early adopters' experiences to date with VTL technology, as well as features and functionalities users would like to see added to their VTL systems, ESG added.

The report is based on a survey of 228 IT professionals of both public and private sector organizations in North America, ranging in size from less than 100 to more than 20,000 employees, ESG said.

The ESG report has resulted in a number of findings including that the adoption of disk-based backup and recovery technologies, in general, remains strong. Users continue to implement these technologies as supplements to and/or permanent replacements for existing tape-based backup and recovery infrastructures, ESG said. Almost three-quarters of the survey respondents are doing some form of backup to disk, which ultimately means users are moving away from tape-based backup, ESG added.

The ESG report has also found that the adoption of VTL solutions is increasing. Almost one-third of survey respondents have implemented a VTL solution and another one-third plan to do so within the next 24 months, ESG said. ESG attributes this growth to a number of technical factors like ease of use, backup and recovery benefits, scalability, and management, besides the increasing availability of VTL solutions from both established vendors and emerging companies, ESG added.

The ESG report also found that backing up to VTL is allowing early adopters to keep backup data on disk longer which provides extended retention periods. ESG asked respondents to indicate what the average amount of time backup data was kept on their VTL system. Almost half of the respondents reported a retention period of 2 months or greater, ESG said. As this technology matures, ESG believes these retention periods will only continue to increase, ESG added.

The report also discovered that backing up to VTL is allowing early adopters to meet and/or exceed both backup and recovery objectives, ESG said. The majority of respondents indicated that since implementing VTL, they have been able to meet or exceed their backup and recovery objectives, ESG said. As organizations keep backup data online for longer periods of time, the ability to back up and recover that data in a timely fashion will be critical, ESG added.

If the data collected by ESG in its research is to be used as proof, then VTL is clearly becoming one of IT's early favorite remedies for fixing broken tape-based data protection environments, ESG said. VTL does not just address the pain points of tape-based backup like media management, and backup and recovery performance, the firm said. For an increasing number of users, it is a means to an ultimately tape-less data protection environment, ESG said. As the data shows, 85 percent of the VTL users have already eliminated tape from their daily backup schedules, ESG added.

The questions addressed in this report include whether backup to tape is still common among users, the extent to which disk-based backup is well-entrenched, the current state of VTL adoption, factors driving VTL adoption, and obstacles to growth, if any, ESG said. The report also included questions on whether VTL solutions have met early adopters' expectations, the type of benefits early adopters' are seeing from their VTL implementations, features or functionalities early adopters would like to see added to their VTL solution, users interest in data de-duplication, and how they rate the search and security features of their VTL. The report also surveys whether VTL is limited to local implementations or is it being used as a backup target for ROBO (remote office/branch office) data protection, ESG said.