HITACHI
DATA SYSTEMS

Hitachi Storage Solutions at Work
Pieper and Associates

Industry
Services: Marketing Design

Solutions—Business Continuity/Backup and Consolidation

Plug-and-play SAN Kit for Hitachi TagmaStore® Modular Storage
The kit runs on the Microsoft® Windows Server 2003 platform and includes:

Hardware: Hitachi TagmaStore Adaptable Modular Storage model AMS200, QLogic SANbox Express 1403 Fibre Channel switch, QLogic SANblade Express QLA210 host bus adaptors, all necessary connectors, cables, and drivers, plus a user's guide

Software: QLogic SANsurfer Express

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Owner, Pieper and Associates

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QLOGIC

Design Firm Updates Storage Look and Feel with Plug-and-play SAN Kit from Hitachi Data Systems

How does a small business obtain networked storage without having to hire a storage area network (SAN) expert or purchase expensive storage management software? Pieper and Associates, a growing design agency, faced that challenge as large design files and rapid data growth were quickly outpacing the agency's storage capacity. The Plug-and-play SAN Kit for Hitachi TagmaStore® Modular Storage provided the answer.

Addressing storage management functions like the Virtual Disk Service (VDS) interface included with Microsoft Windows Server 2003 SP1, this joint solution from Hitachi Data Systems and QLogic Corporation provides a simple, "out of the box" SAN for small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs).

Growing Pains and Creative IT

For Pieper and Associates, a full-service advertising and design firm with a growing client roster and an increasing workload, managing without adequate IT resources was becoming a painfully creative process. Based in southern California since 1975, the company recently moved to a larger office building and nearly tripled its number of employees to meet the demands of new and existing clients. The agency creates collateral, direct mail, packaging, Web sites, and other marketing tools on tight deadlines for a gallery of well-known clients.

Getting Graphic about Business Challenges

Like many SMBs, Pieper and Associates does not have an IT administrator and relies on owner involvement in every facet of the company. "I do just about everything at the agency, from account management and design review to IT, sometimes learning as I go," says second-generation owner Jeff Pieper. "As we've grown, I've had to work longer hours than ever before."

Parts of Pieper's long workdays were dedicated to managing nearly 2TB of storage. The company had a direct attached storage (DAS) configuration, with a total of eight servers for current production data, e-mail databases, client Web hosting, and archived files. As projects were completed, Pieper would compress and archive design files to servers in the office. Each night he would send the files across the company's network for backup on servers located at his house, as an offsite data recovery measure.

The company was adding nearly 90GB of new data per week to an already overloaded storage environment, and while there was room on other servers, there was no efficient way to share or maximize capacity across systems. On several occasions, file servers unexpectedly reached capacity and crashed, freezing the company's ability to produce or access client projects. Nightly backup windows were no longer sufficient for copying files, and the existing IT infrastructure had become complex and unstable, with a sluggish network and inefficient use of storage.

Illustrating Storage Design Requirements

Pieper and Associates needed a comprehensive—and affordable—way to address storage growth and business continuity and reduce the owner's considerable time spent solving storage issues. Immediate priorities were to simplify and optimize storage in a very cost-effective manner. Pieper also wanted to consolidate and network the labyrinth of dedicated legacy machines that had monikers such as The Spaminator and Brown Box, and find a reliable way to protect the lifeblood of the organization—client design files.

Finding Resolution with an Entry-level SAN

Rather than hiring an IT administrator to address these goals, the agency chose an entry-level SAN solution: the Plug-and-play SAN Kit for Hitachi TagmaStore Modular Storage. In providing this kit, based on the Microsoft Windows Server 2003 platform and its VDS interface, Hitachi Data Systems and QLogic delivered the industry's first bundled solution for the Microsoft Simple SAN program.

Pieper and Associates runs the Plug-and-play SAN Kit on TagmaStore Adaptable Modular Storage, model AMS200. In addition to one AMS200, the kit includes a 10-port, 2Gbit QLogic SANbox Express 1403 Fibre Channel switch, two QLogic SANblade Express QLA210 host

bus adaptors, and all the necessary connectors, cables, and drivers to physically connect and configure the SAN.

QLogic SANsurfer Express software is also provided in the kit to manage the switches and adaptors, as well as provision storage, all from a single interface. The complexity of provisioning advance storage was eliminated with the easy-to-use SANsurfer Express GUI. An illustrative one-page guide is also included for easy point-and-click configuration and installation. For SMBs using the Windows operating system, the kit contains a VDS hardware provider that enables SANsurfer Express to provision the AMS200 directly from Windows and assist with disk and storage system management needs.

performance to support business goals. The new architecture boasts the capability to handle more than double the current storage need, with 4.5TB of storage and 15 Fibre Channel disk drives, each providing 350GB of space. Two Windows servers have already been retired thanks to the Plug-and-play SAN Kit, and the remaining five servers now share a common pool of storage. Pieper employees now have faster and more reliable access to their files, speeding the turnaround time to clients. And the agency is enjoying having some "elbow room" for storage capacity.

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Hitachi Data Systems is the first Fibre Channel storage vendor to achieve the Microsoft Simple SAN for Windows Server designation. Simple SAN is a Microsoft initiative designed to help SMBs easily and cost-effectively install and manage SANs in Microsoft Windows Server environments.

Creating a Palette of Storage Benefits

Using the Plug-and-play SAN Kit to consolidate the fragmented, inflexible DAS-server community is helping Pieper and Associates create a palette of scalability, manageability, and

The Plug-and-play SAN Kit ensures simplified management with easy-to-use software wizards that buffer SMB customers from the complexity behind advanced functionality, saving on the time and cost of technical expertise to administer storage. And data replication and backup procedures are more efficient, so Pieper can now monitor and manage the entire network in a matter of minutes per day.

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