



NTP Software and Network Appliance Extend Universal User-Based Storage Management™

White Paper

Abstract

Storage is the most expensive and fastest-growing resource on most company's networks. Gartner Group and others have made it clear that however much it might cost to acquire, storage costs as much or more to maintain. To achieve the best overall result, you must control both acquisition and management costs. This paper will help you understand how the combination of technologies from NTP Software and Network Appliance gives you the most cost-effective storage you can get.

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Introduction

According to Gartner Group, the leading analysts in our industry, most organizations double their need for storage every 18 to 24 months. This makes storage one of the most costly and fastest-growing aspects of everyone's network, and it is likely to remain so for some time. Every network user is a storage user. We are all part of, and you are in charge of, a community that shares the costs and the benefits of this expensive resource.

Storage management can be a challenging task. So much hardware, so many alternatives, and so many issues are involved that it is easy to get lost in the details and fail to see the forest for the trees. But economical management of the storage is your most important task.

Gartner states that for every dollar spent to acquire storage and make it available to your users, you will spend more than that to manage that storage over its lifetime. Therefore, to achieve the most cost-effective overall result for your company, you must make the right choices both in how you host your storage and in how you manage it.

This situation is driven by the actions of our user communities. They create the demand for storage, they consume the storage, and their actions determine how fast the need for storage grows. Our job is to provide the resource for them and then manage it, which of necessity means that we have to manage our users' interaction with the storage. (And now, with recent legislation, we are compelled by law to control and manage what our users do with our storage.)

Universal User-based Management (UUM™) provides a seamless infrastructure that allows you to manage all of your users and all of their storage use, regardless of where their information is located. The partnership between NTP Software and Network Appliance extends UUM to include the NetApp platform. This joint effort greatly simplifies the issues involved in storage management and, in conjunction with NetApp Filers, gives you the lowest overall cost of ownership.

We All Host Storage on Windows

Windows file servers are the most common platform for hosting storage. We all host storage on Windows – and this isn't going to change any time soon. In fact, the opposite is true. Microsoft is giving more attention to storage under Windows, and recent versions of Microsoft operating systems have additional features to improve storage performance and flexibility.

In addition to our Windows servers, most of our users have machines on their desks that also run Windows and host storage. Even if we could get rid of all the Windows servers, we would be left with an even larger pool of storage that is accessible only through Windows: our users' desktop storage.

In spite of the savings offered by storage consolidation and the success of our efforts in this area, most of us will always have Windows servers and desktops hosting storage on our networks. The key to success is to consolidate what we can and then manage *all* of our storage cost-effectively.

Hosting Cost-Effectively

Today, most companies are consolidating their storage into a small number of large pools. This strategy reduces overall management cost for the storage and, if you use specialized hardware designed specifically for hosting storage, increases performance and reliability.

Therefore, your best strategy for hosting storage efficiently probably includes consolidating as much as possible onto a platform designed specifically for this purpose; for example, a Network Appliance NAS. Industry analysts, in particular Forrester Research, have shown that for the servers you consolidate, you will derive the following benefits:

- Reduced hardware cost
- Reduced complexity
- Increased flexibility, including the ability to reconfigure or add capacity without any downtime
- Lower overall maintenance cost
- Faster backups

For most companies, consolidating onto one or more NASes is a worthwhile exercise. The NAS platform is likely to be the lowest-cost hardware platform for your storage. But including one or more NASes in your environment leaves you with storage that is hosted on two different technologies: Windows and NAS.

Seamless Management of Windows and NAS Storage

Now that you have all the highly efficient and cost-effective storage resources you need, the question becomes: How do you manage it all?

Each platform manufacturer provides the basic tools needed to manage storage hosted on their technology. But, for the most part, these tools are limited in their abilities and certainly do not function across platforms. They only work for the technology they accompany. This means that you might have to extend them to get the functionality or data you need, and you will have to learn as many interfaces and APIs as you have storage platforms. All of this very quickly gets out of hand.

What we need is one storage management infrastructure that works for all platforms – one that has a single interface and a single set of policies that can be applied to all users across all hosting technologies: Universal User-based Management.

Universal User-based Management gives you the ability to manage all your users and all your storage devices with a single, simple set of enterprise-wide storage policies. You can take complete control of all of your storage, wherever it is hosted. UUM connects your storage resources, your users, and the policies that apply to them with an online support infrastructure that gives them real-time support and a self-service resource (if you choose to allow it). You gain the ability to automate routine tasks.

Universal User-based Management also gives you the ability to exert control over the volume, content, and age of user objects, while it develops the data you need to understand what is driving your costs and to plan for the future.

With UUM, you can select the most cost-effective technologies to host your storage – and manage it all without any additional hassles or costs.

Summary

- We all have storage hosted on Windows, and we will for some time to come.
- To manage hardware and operations costs, we should consolidate as much of our storage as we can onto more cost-effective, specialized platforms, such as a Network Appliance NAS.
- The challenge then becomes: How do we manage storage spread across dissimilar platforms?
- The way to do this is by using Universal User-based Management technology provided by NTP Software. UUM treats all your storage as a single, unified whole and lets you manage it with one set of policies, for all users, regardless of where their data resides.

NTP Software Professional Services

For further assistance in creating a corporate Storage Management Policy, contact your NTP Software representative at 800-266-2755 or 603-622-4400.

NTP Software Professional Services offers training and consulting services in support of the deployment and configuration of your Storage Resource Management software.

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