

VMware jumps forward in backup

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Abstracts

Backup is often complex and laborious work – one of the biggest pains in IT. It is not a glamorous activity because it does not deliver any improvement to businesses' top lines and is, indeed, an expense that reduces the bottom line. Even when it does its job by averting disaster, it simply maintains the status quo. However, it is essential.

The basic management considerations for backup are the same in the physical and virtual worlds. Server virtualisation in itself does not complicate backup, but its sizeable benefit of hardware consolidation makes life harder for backup administrators. Alongside this, virtual server sprawl increases backup workload because it creates many more servers to administer. These two issues exist regardless of the virtualisation platform and, arguably, virtualisation has turned back the clock for backup. Vendors are still working to put this situation right with architectural changes to backup systems.

In 2007, VMware eased backup problems for its customers by launching its free VMware Consolidated Backup (VCB) framework. However, VCB was not ideal, as it required customers to install more complicated backup systems for their virtual servers than for their physical servers.

This year VMware launched a successor to VCB called vStorage APIs for Data Protection (VADP). VADP is a major step forward, enthusiastically endorsed by third-party suppliers of backup software. It will be a significant competitive advantage for VMware and benefit the company's customers, because it will greatly simplify backup of their virtual servers.

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