

VERITAS and Network Appliance Team up to Offer Unique Data Protection and Recovery Solutions



Date: May 2005

Author: Nancy Hurley

Title: Senior Analyst

Related Practice Areas For This Brief:

Storage and Information Management

Abstract:

VERITAS and NetApp have partnered to deliver a truly unique means to coordinate the administration of data protection methodologies and provide flexible data recovery through the integration of NetBackup 6.0 and the NetApp NearStore R200. This partnership will change the way users implement data protection as a whole, and perhaps more importantly how users think about accessing protected data in the future.

A Powerful Partnership

VERITAS and NetApp announced they had partnered to deliver Integrated Disk Based Data Protection at VERITAS Vision this week. This tight integration between NetBackup 6.0 and the NetApp NearStore and SnapVault solutions provides a single means to manage multiple data protection technologies and enables the flexibility to recover data that no other vendor can bring to the table. However, the power of this announcement really didn't get the press it deserved, perhaps because it is an advanced concept and many may not have fully understood the impact and benefits of this integration. Or perhaps because there are so many vendors out there messaging a slew of disk based data protection solutions that folks had a tough time determining if this partnership had actually produced something unique in the industry- and the answer is yes.

So what does the integration between NetBackup 6.0 and NetApp really offer to users? The features of this integration are:

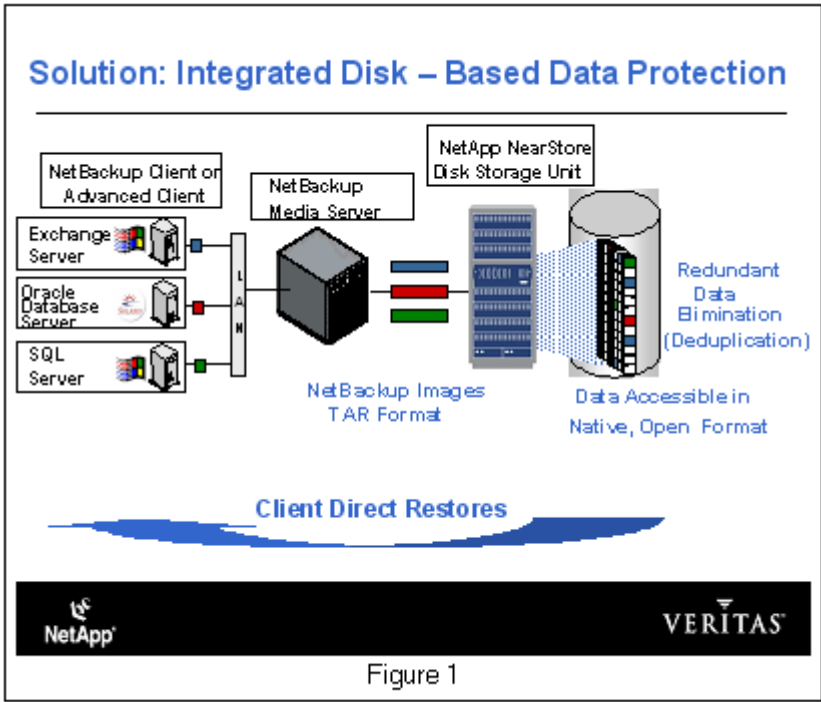
- A common interface to manage snapshots, backup to disk or backup to tape
- A flexible means to recover data through a single interface
 - o Perform full recoveries in case of failure
 - o Perform granular file based recoveries on an as needed basis
- A single catalog that keeps track of all protected data
 - o Provides "access" policies to determine who can recover what data
 - o Shows what data is available for what type of recovery (full, file based, both)

Do not be fooled by other vendors marketing, this team is the only pair on the market that has addressed the need to consolidate data protection technologies and provide a single interface to coordinate and administer multiple protection methodologies. But ESG believes the flexible recovery is truly unique, and it took VERITAS and NetApp a few years of development to provide this feature, so don't expect other vendors to offer this any time in the near future.

What's Different?

What is so unique is the fact that users do not have to change their existing data protection methodologies in order to have flexible recovery options. In the past, if NetBackup performed a backup, it was saved in tar format and the protected data could only be recovered through NetBackup, which would convert the data from tar format back to its native format. In order to restore data, a backup administrator would perform full recoveries or recover single files via the NetBackup GUI. Now, VERITAS and NetApp have added another level of flexibility to the recovery process which will enable end users to recover files outside of NetBackup (no host agent required). With the appropriate permissions, users can mount the protected volumes on the NearStore and recover individual files themselves.

The process works like this- NetBackup 6.0 performs the same, application integrated backups as it always has; only now the target is a NetApp NearStore. The NearStore converts and stores the backup image in the NetApp WAFL file system (Figure 1) A single catalog keeps track of the data, such that the catalog is aware that the

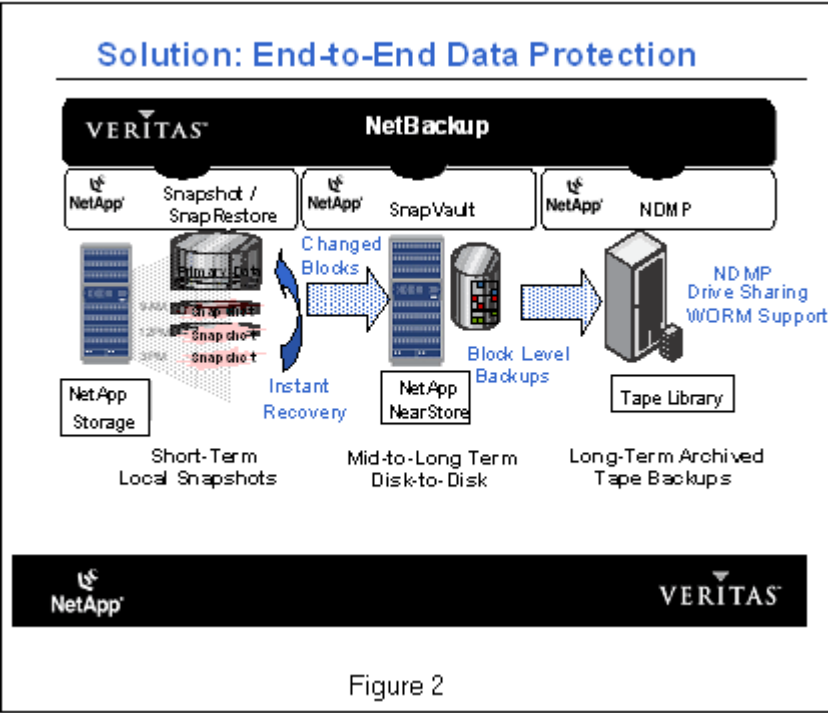


protected data is available for restore via either a client base file “mount” restore or a full NetBackup recovery. In addition, during the conversion redundant data is eliminated saving capacity on the NearStore array.

Lest the impact of this be lost, realize that users, without needing any special software installed on their system and learning to use a new application, can restore their own files without requiring an administrator's help. This allows users to recover files more quickly and off-loads work from the backup administrator. VERITAS and NetApp have teamed together to provide a single view and flexibility to recover based on the actual business requirement. Of course the fact that is all disk based also addresses performance requirements, backup windows can be reduced, recovery times are reduced and with the elimination of redundant data overall capacity requirements are reduced, reducing cost. Plenty of vendors will claim they can reduce backup windows and costs with disk based solutions, but they have yet to introduce the consolidation of data protection technologies through a single interface and the flexible recovery options that this integration provides.

Of course neither company is ignoring the fact that tape is still an integral part of the backup process. NetBackup 6.0 can also orchestrate end to end data protection of NetApp data protection solutions including Snapshots, SnapRestore, SnapVault and NDMP enabled backups. While NetApp

provides these solutions independently of VERITAS, now that NetBackup 6.0 can coordinate the administration of end to end protection (see Figure 2), together these solutions become even more powerful.



The Bottom Line

Perhaps the market was expecting a simple announcement from these two market leaders, something in the lines of “NetBackup now supports NearStore”; however this was much more than a simple integration of a new disk target. This is the first step for these two vendors to change the way users implement data protection as a whole, and perhaps more importantly how users think about accessing protected data in the future. By eliminating the “barriers” that required users to recover data via strictly defined methods dictated by technology as opposed to user requirements, VERITAS and NetApp have changed the recovery landscape. While we expect other vendors will follow suit, and perhaps each will partner with other vendors (there is really no exclusivity to this deal), for now this partnership is the only game in town offering this level of flexible, integrated disk based recovery. Considering it was two years in the making, it will be tough for others to follow suit any time soon.

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