Nominee: X-IO

Nomination title: X-IO for Datacentre ICT management product of the year

What are your product's/solution's key distinguishing features and/or USP?

In today's diverse storage environments, managing an organisation's storage can be a huge challenge. IT administrators require a reliable, user-friendly and easy to manage storage system as part of their IT infrastructure. With this in mind, X-IO has developed management applications for IT administrators to maximise the performance of their storage solutions. By simplifying operations, X-IO is making IT administrator's lives a lot easier.

X-IO's ISE Manager Suite with Server View brings an organisation's entire hypervisor ecosystem together on a single pane of glass allowing users to build and operate high performance, highly available virtualised environments.

What makes ISE Manager Suite so unique is that it has a number of features that go well beyond simple storage provisioning. With the tight hypervisor integration ISE Manager is capable of automatically implementing best practices for performance and availability that traditionally only experienced storage administrators were capable of performing. This leads to the ability to provision storage for hypervisor clusters in a few clicks, without any complexity, leveraging the tips and tricks of senior storage admins.

Some of the unique features of ISE Manager Suite include:

•   Single interface and wizard for provisioning an ISE volume to a running VM on a large cluster, in only a few clicks.

•   ISE Manager checks that all paths to cluster nodes are presented properly and optimised for performance. If it finds that any cluster node is missing a path to the ISE it provides a "Fix-It" button for single click remediation

• Automatic configuration of multipathing policies with the ability to set the multipathing policy without having to use the vSphere Client

• Setup and monitoring of X-IO's phone-home feature called 'ActiveWatch'

• Performance monitoring tools that integrate with the Microsoft Windows Performance Monitor for long term and very granular data collection used in reporting and troubleshooting

• Support for hundreds of ISE systems and the ability to backup and restore its configurations

• Support and integration for VMware vSphere, Citrix XenServer, Linux, Microsoft Hyper-V and OpenStack.

What tangible impact has your product/solution had on the market and your customers?

By utilising ISE Manager Suite to its maximum ability, IT managers are set to save hours of time in management and monitoring of the solution, allowing them to focus their attention to more urgent IT matters. More importantly ISE Manager gives administrators the ability to minimise risk and maximise performance without having to be storage experts.

Reducing Risk:

Users can quickly provision and manage physical and virtual storage mapping the relationships between storage, servers and Virtual Machines (VMs) using Server View. Typically this requires the user to bounce back and forth between the hypervisor management interface and the storage management interface, opening up the potential for a misconfiguration. ISE Manager checks and corrects all path presentations to the cluster. ISE Manager will automatically remove the SCSI entries from the virtual machine when deleting VDMKs and RDMs from a powered on virtual machine, removing the chance that the virtual machine will end up in an inconsistent state.

Maximising Performance:

ISE Manager allows users to initialise and format volumes, including specification of file systems type, partition type, byte allocation size and drive letter assignment, all from one

interface with minimal mouse clicks. With its ability to monitor and manipulate multipath settings, ISE Manager also automatically addresses any changes in controller ownership of the LUN which reduces the chance of over subscribing paths to the ISE and provides for a constant balance of IO over each path.

What are the major differentiators between your product/solution and those of your primary competitors?

With a foundation based on reliability and performance, X-IO stands out in the market for its optimisation of price and efficiency. X-IO has solved real-life business challenges ensuring efficiency and continuity for organisations.

X-IO's ISE Manager dramatically reduces operational complexities by provisioning storage while automating best practices that improve performance and reduce risk, unlike any other storage management software. Server View bridges the gap between storage and virtual machines with operations that include datastore and VM partition alignment and a single display reporting the relationship between the ISE and RDM, VMFS, and VMDK volumes. Server View has been proven to automatically identify and fix issues that jeopardise a predictable and available ecosystem.

Administrators of virtual environments have several different interfaces that they must interact with in their day-to-day activities. Administering storage has typically taken tens of steps and working with the storage vendor's interface and the vSphere Client. Also, ensuring that best practices are followed when setting properties of the LUN for the ESX server is a critical. ISE Manager integrates directly to components in the hypervisor like the VMware API to provide a single interface that can be used for managing Storage for the most popular hypervisors. Server View communicates with one or many vCenter Servers to provide a single interface for storage operations, and ensure that best practices for X-IO storage is always implemented.

This interface has been so popular with X-IO customers that additional functionality has been added above and beyond just managing ISE Storage (power operations for VMs, VMware Linked Clone creation, open VM console sessions, etc). Additionally, X-IO also has a plug-in

for the vSphere Client and Web Client that enables the same Server View functionality. Managing storage in a VMware environment can be a challenging job, with multiple interfaces, and settings that are required for optimal operation. ISE Manager ensures that managing storage is the least stressful part of an administrator's day.

Why nominee should win

Give us a brief summary of up to 5 bullet points why the nominee(s) or organisation should win this award (please note 100 word limit)

• Organisations can manage entire virtual environments on a single screen, saving IT managers vast amounts of time

• ISE Manager Suite comes as standard on all X-IO ISE products saving IT managers budget

• Maximises the performance of organisations storage, while remaining cost effective

• Has the ability to run on a physical or virtual machine (VM)

• ISE Manager simplifies storage and allows IT administrator's greater visibility of their storage than other vendors