Product Spotlight

Overcoming the Hyperconvergence Planning Problem

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Hyperconvergence is a compelling solution to organizations trying to simplify their virtual infrastructures in an effort to be more "cloud-like." The technology consolidates storage software into the hypervisor of a virtual infrastructure, eliminating the need for a separate shared storage system and its network. These designs should deliver more than acceptable performance for most environments and simplify data protection. The result should be a significantly less expensive system that is also easier to manage. The challenge facing hyperconverged adoption is the amount of planning that goes into its initial purchase and on-going expansion.

With most hyperconverged systems purchases and upgrades need to be expertly planned in order to properly test and justify the investment. Maxta, a software-only hyperconverged solution, has a new option that allows organizations to adopt hyperconvergence on an "as-it-happens" basis, which is how life in the real data center occurs.

The Hyperconverged Challenge

Many hyperconverged solutions are turnkey systems that include servers, storage and networking. The requirement to buy all three components at once makes planning a big issue. As a result organizations need to select a hyperconverged infrastructure when the time comes to replace servers, storage and upgrade their hypervisor license. The problem is these three events rarely occur at the same time, so organizations typically purchase hyperconverged systems when there is a "green field" project available. Without perfect timing, which rarely occurs, most simply find it easier and less risky to just continue down the path of less resistance, buying dedicated compute and storage infrastructures.

Another challenge with the strict turnkey approach is that it limits flexibility as the environment grows. Turnkey systems typically force the customer to continue to buy the same hardware from the same vendor over and over again. If the organization feels there is a better technical or financial server option available to them, they can't take advantage of it.

The final challenge is testing and verifying the configuration, which requires that the customer either buy the product, implement it and at least commit to buy it, if everything works according to plan. This process creates another timing problem. The evaluation of the solution takes place under the pressure of an "evaluation clock", which typically runs 30 days, and often leads to incomplete testing since IT professionals are already time constrained.

Hyperconvergence on Your Schedule

Maxta, a software-only hyperconverged vendor, now has a freemium version of its solution. It allows IT professionals to learn about hyperconvergence, test how it will work in their environment and plan a deployment based on IT's schedule. Since Maxta is software only, an organization can use its existing servers for testing and evaluation, and in production. The software-only freemium approach is much more compatible with the "as-it-happens" reality of the modern data center.

The freemium version is very complete. The only limitations are the amount of capacity it will support (a generous 24TB), limited technical support and no maintenance. Other than that, the freemium version enjoys feature parity with the premium product. Those features include thin provisioning, snapshots, clones, replication, metro-clustering, compression and deduplication as well as complete high availability.

A freemium model is a bold move for any vendor. It allows the customer to thoroughly kick the tires prior to making any commitment. Maxta only sees revenue once the customer becomes too dependent on the product, illustrated by needing support or putting more than 24TBs of data in the environment.

StorageSwiss Take

For many organizations, a hyperconverged architecture just makes sense. The problem is that the organizations need to carefully plan for the right moment in time (or a new project) in order to take that first step toward hyperconvergence. There are also legitimate concerns about hardware lock-in. Maxta's freemium version, with its software-powered flexibility, represents a new option for IT professionals. Organizations can start with the freemium version and learn about hyperconvergence as time allows, then upgrade to the premium version when they need to.

About Maxta

Maxta is redefining enterprise IT infrastructure through a groundbreaking approach to hyperconvergence that dramatically simplifies operations while delivering much greater agility and cost savings. Our award-winning MxSP® software and MaxDeploy® appliances offer unparalleled freedom of choice in servers, storage devices and server virtualization platforms, while eliminating the need for complex and costly storage arrays. For more information, visit us at www.maxta.com or follow us on Twitter @MaxtaInc and LinkedIn.

About Storage Switzerland

Storage Switzerland is an analyst firm focused on the virtualization and storage marketplace. For more information please visit our website **storageswiss.com**