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Dell ships first EqualLogic Storage Blade Arrays as new research shows customers seek simpler IT solutions

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New commissioned survey finds an estimated 74 percent of IT leaders believe storing and managing data today is generally complex



Arpit Joshipura, Head of Product Management & Marketing, Dell Networking, at NetEvents EMEA Press and Analyst Summit, Algarve, Portugal

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Dell announced it has begun shipping its first enterprise-class storage blade arrays that simplify and consolidate data centers by combining with Dell blade servers and networking switches inside a single blade chassis. The convergence of these technologies represents the latest example of Dell's end-to-end approach to support customers seeking data centers that are easy to set-up, manage and scale as needed.

According to a new commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting, on behalf of Dell and recently released, the vast majority of IT organizations are seeking easier-to-use storage solutions to free-up staff members' time to work on strategic projects.¹ The survey of 839 IT leaders and storage administrators, across the U.S. and Europe, shows that storing and managing data today is viewed as complex, and there is high demand for solutions that are simpler to manage and use more automation.

Key survey findings show that approximately:

- 74 percent of IT leaders and 66 percent of storage administrators believe that storing and managing data is generally complex.
- 85 percent of IT leaders and 87 percent of storage administrators believe their storage environment could benefit from easier to use technology and enhanced automation.
- 94 percent of IT leaders would like to see easier-to-use and highly automated storage features in their next storage solution purchase; 40 percent state it would make a “huge difference” and would be a priority for their next storage purchase.
- 87 percent of storage administrators say their job is rewarding and satisfying; however, the majority (57 percent) spend between 26 and 75 percent of their day on tasks they feel are focused more on maintaining daily operations than on strategic value add.
- Half (48 percent) of storage administrators expect they would work on higher level IT or business strategy if their firm adopted storage technology that was easier to manage and freed-up some of their time.

Additionally, an estimated 95 percent of IT leaders and storage administrators see value in buying storage from the same vendor as they buy server, networking, system management or IT services. Forty-two percent say they buy multiple IT components from the same vendor fairly exclusively or whenever possible, citing ease of integration, technology synergies between products, and ease of purchase as their top reasons for these decisions.

Dell EqualLogic Blade Arrays enable converged infrastructure to help simplify IT

The scalable and easy-to-manage Dell EqualLogic PS-M4110 Blade Arrays provide customers all of the functionality and enterprise-class features of traditional EqualLogic arrays inside a Dell PowerEdge M1000e blade chassis. The blade arrays combine with Dell 11th or 12th generation Dell PowerEdge blade servers and Dell Force10 or PowerConnect networking, enabling customers to run an entire data center within a single, compact blade enclosure that can help streamline IT management and operations.

Dell’s first storage blade arrays, like all EqualLogic solutions, are developed for highly virtualized environments with “ease of use” and advanced automation as core design principles. The blade arrays’ Fluid Data architecture and peer-scaling allow for simultaneous scalability of performance and capacity within and outside the blade chassis for non-disruptive growth. The arrays can scale outside the blade chassis to more than two petabytes of storage in a single group, and provide nearly double the usable capacity – up to 96 percent more – than competitive arrays inside the chassis.²

EqualLogic set-up and deployment capabilities are closely integrated with the blade chassis management console, enabling multiple EqualLogic Blade Arrays to be configured in less than 20 minutes - a fraction of the set-up time required by other available blade storage solutions.³

Additional features that can ease deployment and management include:

- Centralized monitoring and reporting tools that gather and provide in-depth information on performance, capacity and alerts across multiple groups of arrays, enabling improved performance and effective allocation of group resources;
- Flexibility with blade arrays that fit into any slot within the blade chassis;
- Advanced data protection, such as snapshots, clones and replicas, and advanced integration with Microsoft, VMware and Linux platforms wrapped into every solution; and,

- Support for multi-generational EqualLogic SANs, allowing existing arrays to receive continuous advancements and capabilities as storage and business requirements grow. The combination of Dell storage, server and networking technologies in a blade chassis provides customers a compact, shared footprint that can reduce the need for excessive licenses, space, cable configuration and power and cooling costs as well as an integrated approach to infrastructure management.

With this Dell convergence, customers can support up to 48 percent more Microsoft SQL, Microsoft Exchange and Microsoft SharePoint users and up to 42 more users per watt of power compared to a competitive blade server and storage offering.⁴ Additionally, Dell's converged solution is notably easier to deploy, with up to 55 percent fewer major configuration steps, to set-up storage alone.²

The new EqualLogic Blade Arrays are complemented by EqualLogic software that tightly integrates SANs with hosts and applications. With an all-inclusive software licensing model, EqualLogic storage systems include all supporting software applications and tools without additional fees.

"These research findings are in lock step with what our customers have been telling us and are a fundamental reason why Dell is focused on delivering all of the benefits of enterprise class storage without users needing a doctorate degree in storage to master our solutions," said Darren Thomas, vice president and general manager, Dell Storage. "Dell leads the industry in embedding automation and 'ease of use' into our portfolio to improve storage simplicity and efficiency. Combine this focus with Dell's development of broader, end-to-end data center solutions, and we're in a unique position to help customers become more efficient, agile and responsive to the organizations they support."

"The most appealing aspect of the Dell EqualLogic Blade Array is its simplicity. It's easy to deploy and scale," said Emilio Garcia, network coordinator, Pearland ISD near Houston, Texas.

"With only two network managers supporting 23 campuses, this simplicity is critical to providing our students and staff a seamless IT experience. What more could you ask for?"

"The Dell EqualLogic Blade Array worked great from start to finish," said Mike Quirin, IT manager for Ansaldo STS. "The system was quite easy to set up. Even if the system came without any instructions, I'd be able to get it up and running on my own. That's how truly simple and intuitive it is."