



Response to EMC VMAX³ announcement for SVC

“EMC Announces VMAX³ as Enterprise Data Service Platform”

EMC has relabeled their Federated Tiered Storage feature of VMAX³ as FAST.X along with modifications. The modifications include changes to allow a variable number of processor cores to be allocated for the FAST.X software and use of external storage as different tier levels within the FAST tiering software including Service Level Objective settings. Previously, external storage attached with Federated Tiered Storage was always relegated to tier 4.

As part of the external storage attachment with FAST.X, two offerings from EMC were announced: CloudArray with VMAX³ and XtremIO with VMAX³ as another tier of storage. CloudArray is the TwinStrata software on a server with a Fibre Channel target and operates as LUNs that are migrated to a cloud. The XtremIO is another externally attached (via Fibre Channel) storage system as a tier within VMAX³ with the benefit of the data services provided.

SRDF has been enhanced with an SRDF/Metro cluster version that provides native active-active stretched clusters for VMAX³. Previously, stretched clusters were only available with the use of VPLEX. Stretched clusters are supported for all attached storage, including externally attached.

EMC is positioning the VMAX³ as a data services platform with the ability to virtualize external storage and EMC incorporated storage (CloudArray and XtremIO), providing the advanced services of VMAX³ including replication and active-active stretched clusters. EMC messaging is a copy of the message long presented by IBM with the SVC and includes the same advanced data services and common management value proposition.

IBM to Customers

From a message to the customer standpoint, IBM can point to the EMC messaging and show that EMC is now understanding the value brought with SVC and

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repositioning the VMAX³ to bring those capabilities to customers. Prior attempts with Invista and VPLEX as a virtualization platform have not met with the success of SVC. Note that VPLEX has primarily succeeded as a stretched cluster implementation (prior to SRDF/Metro that is to be released in the 2nd quarter) and distance extension solution because of deficiencies in the VMAX, VNX, and XtremIO product features.

It should also be pointed out to the customer that having an XtremIO connected behind the VMAX³ is EMC's counter to the IBM FlashSystem V9000 which uses the Spectrum Virtualize software as an SVC in front of the FlashSystem 900 to provide advanced data services.

IBM should alert the customers to the fact that EMC is copying the IBM SVC solution by adapting the VMAX³ to make it a storage virtualization solution with the advanced data services and consolidated management available with the SVC since inception in 2003. Announcements of externally attached storage (including XtremIO) as storage tiers are catch-up items for EMC that are being positioned as new – new for EMC that is. These arguments should devalue the impact of the EMC announcement and question EMC's commitment to the long-term future of VMAX³ as an independent storage system.