

# STORAGE SWITZERLAND

## BREAKING THE BACKUP SINGLE PANE OF GLASS NETVAULT EXTENDED ARCHITECTURE PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT



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Backup needs to change from a process that simply asks "is the backup done?" and "can we recover?" to one focused on service level agreements (SLAs), providing assurance the right set of data can be recovered in the right amount of time with minimal data exposure. Business unit managers and IT groups like Exchange administrators and DBAs not only want to know that their data is safely protected, they may also want to manage the process themselves.

The roadblock to this shared-responsibility, enterprise-wide view of backup is that enterprise backup products are typically focused on the backup administrator, not the data owners. In fact, many applications boast about their "single pane of glass" for backup management.

The problem with this approach is that it only benefits that backup specialist. The reality is that multiple members of the IT team, as well as business unit managers, need visibility to the success and failure of the backup process. In addition, the single pane of glass approach creates a scaling problem, making the backup administrator the choke point for keeping the data protection process current with the production data process. To address these challenges, [Dell](#) Software has announced [NetVault Extended Architecture \(XA\)](#), a new platform that allows for role-based usage of backup applications and enterprise-wide SLA management.

### NetVault Extended Architecture

NetVault XA will unify the company's myriad data protection technologies, a group of products that today includes the NetVault, vRanger and Recovery Manager product lines. Version 1.0 of the NetVault XA platform will cover NetVault Backup, NetVault SmartDisk, and vRanger, with additional products becoming enabled in subsequent releases. Dell is the first vendor to agree with what IT professionals already know: different environments can benefit from environment-specific data protection tools. Dell has NetVault Backup and NetVault SmartDisk for stand-alone server environments, vRanger for virtualized environments, and NetVault LiteSpeed for SQL and Oracle environments.

While environment-specific tools protect data, they are not equipped to provide an SLA-level of protection. Also, granular tools are harder for the enterprise as a whole to directly interact with. Unification of these tools requires more than just a GUI that hides the individual interfaces. To be valuable to the enterprise, the tool has to provide direct control over and roll-up reporting from the individual components.

NetVault XA delivers a common user interface, driven by SLAs. This GUI provides a view of the data protection environment from either the aspect of a backup administrator with multiple sites, or that of an IT group manager like Exchange or Oracle. The backup administrator can manage these sites, or the group manager can manage just the servers that are of interest to that group.

As stated above, unification is more than just a slick GUI. NetVault XA adds a global set of services to the backup process. These services include a global policy manager, a service level manager, global reporting, global scheduling, a global catalog, and will include future services like a cloud gateway and deduplication. This will allow Dell to build leaner applications and not have to 'reinvent the wheel' every time a new data protection product is created. It also may allow third-party applications to plug into the NetVault XA framework, so they won't have to recreate all these services either.

These services then provide a common language to communicate to any backup application, so the service level manager can create a role-based administration of the backup process. This brings scalability and organizational visibility to the data protection process, because it's now driven by SLAs and not data.

#### Managing SLA not Data Protection

NetVault XA changes the focus of data protection from protecting the *IT infrastructure* to protecting *IT services*. Instead of managing backup jobs and policies, the backup administrator, IT group or business unit will manage an SLA. NetVault XA will compare the SLA for a given application to the backup policies

for that application to make sure that they are in agreement with each other.

In the future, NetVault XA will be enhanced to automatically set the backup policy based on the SLA. This will allow the backup process to scale to meet the challenge of an ever-growing data set and an ever-tightening backup window. SLAs are understood by IT group leaders and department heads, which means they will be able to create their own data protection schemes without having to learn the nuances of the backup applications.

For example, the Exchange Administrator could decide that they can afford a down time of three hours and a data exposure of six hours. They may also want an off-site copy every day which should be retained for five years. NetVault XA will allow the Exchange administrator to make those requests, and then it will configure the appropriate backup technology to meet those requests.

#### Storage Swiss Take

As Storage Switzerland covered in a recent article, "[Enterprise Backup Is Broken](#)", while it can scale computationally, it doesn't scale humanistically. The backup administrator becomes an overworked, underappreciated choke point. By providing an SLA-driven approach to data protection, NetVault XA breaks that choke point and allows granular delegation of the data protection process, as well as organizational overview for the data owners and business units. NetVault XA may be one of the most fundamental changes to the data protection process in the last 25 years.

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