

Revitalise your storage with Northdoor

With a broad range of internal requirements to support, the typical storage infrastructure is complex, costly and difficult to manage. Many organisations want to take greater advantage of the latest and greatest technologies—including flash storage—but are held back by the perceived negative impact of introducing yet another set of solutions.

By working with Northdoor to introduce a software-defined approach to storage, organisations can confidently adopt the latest flash-based technologies for immediate business benefits, while prolonging the useful life of older storage technologies through virtualisation, and aligning the goals of the business, the finance team and the IT function.

Don't retire outdated storage systems: revitalise your storage with a deeply integrated combination of powerful IBM storage virtualisation and dynamic all-flash performance.

Software-defined storage

The sharp fall in the cost of enterprise-class flash storage has brought the technology within the financial reach of the vast majority of businesses. Once the preserve of critical systems requiring ultra-low latency for the most valuable business transactions, today flash storage is bringing its performance and flexibility benefits to a much broader set of systems.

One key sticking point remains: very few organisations have the luxury of starting from a clean sheet, and integrating new technologies while maintaining existing ones can seem a bridge too far. As the business demands new functionality (and is even prepared to set up its own unmanaged solutions in the cloud), the IT function faces the challenge of managing both current and new technology while keeping costs controlled and predictable.

By embracing software-defined storage, organisations can virtualise and consolidate their existing storage technologies into a more flexible and easy-to-manage whole. Such a solution can also align the goals of finance, IT and the business: supporting ultra-rapid provisioning of new services within a highly manageable infrastructure that also offers tight cost control.

A survey conducted by analyst firm Enterprise Strategy Group (ESG) ranked storage virtualisation as the number-one technology for reducing capital and/or operating costs in data storage.¹

In addition to making it easier to serve all business requirements in an economical way, this approach simplifies and accelerates the adoption of the latest and greatest storage technologies, including flash.

Northdoor can help your organisation understand the potential of software-defined storage, and build a practical solution enabled by IBM Spectrum Storage Suite. With licensing on a flat, per-TB basis, this IBM software-defined solution brings complete predictability to capacity planning, enabling organisations to understand how growing data volumes will impact their IT costs. The solution includes IBM Spectrum Virtualize software, capable of virtualising not only IBM storage systems but also hundreds of systems from other storage vendors. This means that practically all existing storage can be brought into a single pool and managed using the same advanced tools, reducing costs and the potential for human error.

Northdoor also has deep experience of deploying flash storage, fully integrated within a software-defined landscape to maximise the benefits and minimise the management costs. IBM flash-based technologies take advantage of all of the advanced services and management features within IBM Spectrum Storage Suite to enable organisations with many different workloads and/or budget constraints to benefit from flash performance and economics while increasing the value of their existing storage systems.

Tailormade solutions

Naturally, flash storage comes in many shapes and sizes, and it can be challenging to find the best mix of technologies to deliver the required performance within constrained budgets. Northdoor's decades-long experience of enterprise data management means that we have the skills to determine the functional and price/performance requirements in each area, and to assign the most appropriate storage resources — either carved out from existing, freshly virtualised capacity or delivered from new flash-based storage solutions. Whether existing or new storage is used, the management interfaces and advanced storage services remain the same, because everything is coordinated within IBM Spectrum Storage Suite.

In today's rapidly evolving business and IT environments, no single all-flash storage solution can address every application workload and user requirement. Some business-critical use cases demand extreme performance and consistent microsecond latency. At the other end of the spectrum, many entry-level and mid-sized workload environments can greatly benefit from all-flash performance, though economics are always a key consideration.

All-flash and hybrid-flash offerings within the IBM FlashSystem family provide solutions right across this range of requirements, offering industry-leading storage virtualisation and data services into the bargain. The magic ingredient is the integration of IBM Spectrum Virtualize technologies to provide storage services and virtualisation capabilities. With a single code base across all platforms, and a single set of storage management and virtualisation functions, Spectrum Virtualize offers easy deployment and management.

For a set price per TB, and with completely predictable costs for scalability, organisations get all the storage technology they need, delivered rapidly and flexibly to the business, and managed through a single pane of glass.

Blending new and existing technology

Within an IBM software-defined storage environment powered by IBM Spectrum Storage Suite, organisations can seamlessly integrate new all-flash and hybrid-flash technologies alongside existing storage systems. Advanced storage-management features are then available across all virtualised capacity regardless of the physical system it resides on, including:

- Real-time data compression to help improve efficiency
- Non-disruptive migration of live data between physical systems
- Automated policy-based tiering of storage to balance performance and cost
- Efficient mirroring and replication for reduced network impact
- Built-in write-caching that improves both performance and endurance of flash storage
- Ultra-fast system rebuilds and assimilation of new capacity
- Support for multi-site and hybrid-cloud infrastructures that enable high availability and data mobility between data centres.

Northdoor helps organisations adopt software-defined storage to maximise the value and life of their existing investments, while opening up new possibilities around flash technologies. Rather than simply selling software and hardware, we design, deliver and support evolving storage solutions that reduce costs while increasing capabilities both today and tomorrow.

Learn more

For more information on storage virtualisation solutions from Northdoor, please visit www.northdoor.co.uk

¹ "ESG Solution Showcase: Primary Storage Data Reduction Trends", Enterprise Strategy Group, June 2016. <https://www-01.ibm.com/common/ssi/cgi-bin/ssialias?htmlfid=TSL03294USEN>

