

Veritas CommandCentral Storage Change Manager:

Enhanced Functionality for Veritas CommandCentral 5.1

Date: December, 2008

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Abstract: Symantec added Storage Change Manager as a key part of the Veritas CommandCentral family. The new product will monitor end-to-end data center storage environments and provide critical change and configuration compliance information to help IT shops maintain business level SLAs.

Symantec Adapts to Change

On December 15th, Symantec publically launched a new version of its heterogeneous storage resource management software, Veritas CommandCentral 5.1 (CC). Included in this release is a new module focused on monitoring change in networked storage environments. Storage Change Manager (SCM) will focus on solving one of the most pressing challenges in today's advanced, complex data centers: recognizing, analyzing, and tracking changes that may impact data availability for mission critical applications. Specifically, SCM will deliver:

- Detection of infrastructure changes, both physical and virtual, from the application to the spindle.
 - SCM shares the same discovery layer as CC Storage, so it includes support for all the storage networking equipment and server platforms supported by CC Storage. SCM includes support for server virtualization leader VMware and other storage virtualization technologies from IBM and HDS. Support is also available for NetApp arrays.
 - Agentless support is enhanced in this release. Visibility and monitoring of the data path from the server (including ESX) to storage is accomplished without the need for agents. Detailed server and application knowledge still require agents, but can leverage existing CC Storage agents.
 - CommandCentral SCM supports all major applications, including: Exchange, Veritas NetBackup, Veritas Cluster Server, Oracle, DB2, Sybase, & SQL Server.
 - Multi-pathing environments are recognized, so both physical and logical connectivity to the storage can be monitored and verified. The software will provide proactive notification of down links or potential risks to application and data availability.
- Rapid notification and alerting of changes that violate policies and impact SLAs.
 - Leverages policy-based enforcement compliance with standard configurations. End-users can create company specific standard configurations matched to business SLAs. The software validates that any changes made to the environment are in line with these policies.
 - Goes beyond end-user generated policies to provide industry standard best practice policies that ship with the product. The goal is to analyze the environment and identify risks associated with current configurations for standard high availability environments, such as unauthorized configurations and single point of failure analysis.
- Stronger links to ITIL.
 - Configuration and change management – Maintains a historical record of changes from the application, server, SAN, and storage domains that can be used to demonstrate compliance during audits.
 - Incident management – Correlates all changes and detects the impact of these changes to an application or storage infrastructure. Provides the ability to quickly identify a change that resulted in an outage. It also detects changes that remediate existing policy violations.

Storage Change Manager will be included in CC 5.1 and can also be purchased as a standalone package. It leverages all existing CC Storage agents for infrastructure and applications.

End-users Will Appreciate the New Modules

Symantec has been a pioneer in delivering heterogeneous storage resource management software, offering comprehensive support over a wider range of heterogeneous products. The addition of Storage Change Manager fills a coverage gap in large, complex data centers. With separate, but still interdependent, technology silos constantly experiencing moves, additions, and changes, manual validation of each change has become too time consuming and error prone, potentially limiting a company's ability to react quickly. In order to maintain service levels and accommodate change, software solutions that monitor and report on changes are essential as they provide:

- **Visibility into complex and potentially abstracted (virtualized) technology environments.** According to ESG research,¹ 46% percent of server virtualization users are running Tier 1 applications and another 33% are planning to deploy Tier 1 applications. By delivering support for virtualized server, and storage environments, SCM is able to provide a holistic view of the data center environment—regardless of the layers of abstraction created with virtualization technologies. This ensures that changes in physical or virtual environments will be identified, analyzed, and reported on. This level of support will be even more critical as enterprises already running Tier 1 applications expand the number of mission critical and production applications supported by virtualized environments.
- **Accelerated problem resolution.** Frequently, outages are caused by change—either intentional or unintentional. For example, equipment failures or unintended configuration changes can have ripple effects that trigger cascading alarm storms. The ability to locate the source of the outage can greatly simplify troubleshooting efforts. This is especially true in large data centers with independent technology domains where outages lead to time wasting, finger pointing sessions.
- **Validation of compliance with best practices or company specific standards.** With virtual servers being brought online in minutes, IT needs to react quickly; a system must be in place to ensure that the infrastructure supporting the applications is in compliance with configuration standards and meets industry best practices for availability. SCM's ability to provide some standard best practices, like single point of failure analysis, out of the box provides a solid system of checks and balances to enable IT to continue working at a frenetic pace while ensuring that business SLAs are being met or exceeded. Additionally, it takes some of the burden off of senior architects, enabling them to set policies and allow the software to enforce changes enacted by junior IT staff. This also provides tremendous day-one value as the initial discovery and subsequent analysis against best practices can pinpoint numerous issues that were previously undetected.
- **An alternative to vendor-based change management.** Symantec, arguably one of the largest independent software vendors for resource management software, provides one of the few vendor agnostic solutions available on the market. Most other change management solutions for storage are offered by storage vendors (e.g., Onaro was acquired by NetApp in '08). This independent, vendor agnostic approach, coupled with the capabilities of CC Storage provides value to customers with heterogeneous storage environments: The ability to view and report on the entire environment through a single pane of glass is very compelling. The move to support agentless discovery will also remove a major implementation hurdle and help accelerate adoption.

“Futureproof” Your Data Center

Data centers are rapidly becoming more complex—driven by data center consolidation, rapid virtualization sprawl, and exploding storage capacity. In order to manage these growing environments without additional headcount, IT managers need automated tools to replace burdensome manual tasks. Symantec's Veritas CommandCentral ties together CommandCentral Storage and Storage Change Manager to deliver a powerful solution for the data center. The Storage Change Manager module will deliver significant value today with the potential to be even more valuable in the future. Symantec can ensure its success by:

- **Creating an online community to share best practices and industry standard policies.** The faster these sites are populated with useful policies covering a wide range of configurations, the more valuable

¹ Source: ESG Research Report, The Impact of Server Virtualization on Storage, December 2007

they are to end-users. Symantec should also ensure the quality of the postings or at least provide a ranking system.

- **Leveraging this technology to extract additional information.** For example, Symantec could extend change management support to monitor and track changes for business continuity or disaster recovery environments. Change monitoring in these types of environments can often be of the most difficult processes to enable as it requires detailed insight into multiple locations. However, considering the amount of money spent on creating these multi-site environments, investing in a tool that tracks any changes that might invalidate those makes a lot of sense.
- **Continuing its commitment to heterogeneous environment support, especially for virtualization technologies.** Adding support for Microsoft's HyperV and EMC's Invista or virtual provisioning will extend value for end-users as these technologies take hold in the marketplace. Symantec needs to reinforce its position as a vendor agnostic software solution.

The Bottom Line

Veritas CommandCentral from Symantec provides great visibility into data center environments and the addition of Storage Change Manager solves a problem IT really needs help with: dealing with the rapid and large volume of change in the data center. Symantec isn't the first to deliver a change management solution, but it does have some significant advantages in bringing a new product to market. First, it can leverage a large install base of customers and established channel partners. Second, it is an independent software vendor with no storage agenda. As such, it has a strong track record of delivering heterogeneous storage management solutions. In fact, with CommandCentral, it had one of the first storage management solutions that supported virtualization technologies (server and storage). Third, it provides an integrated suite of solutions under the CommandCentral umbrella that will scale to meet the most challenging data center environments. Replacing multiple separate point tools with an integrated storage management suite can reduce installation and training time. In fact, for the CC 5.1 family, after purchasing and installing one module, the others can be turned on via a software key—as they share the same database and management server. This will help Symantec add instant and incremental value.

Given the complexity and frequency of changes taking place in a data center—especially in open systems and virtualized environments—Storage Change Manager should be well received. End-users get the flexibility to deploy the software as a standalone solution, integrate it into an existing CC environment, or leverage it as a part of CC 5.1. This opens doors for Symantec within IT shops in need of a heterogeneous and agentless change management solution, allowing them to try Symantec products with minimal upfront investment. The ability to create custom configurations and leverage best practices templates will accelerate the time to value for a business, enabling senior staff to set policy and junior staff to enact changes with a safety net in place. With so many problems created by change in an IT environment, simply knowing that *something* changed can be half the battle. As data centers become more complex and highly abstracted, change management software will be a requirement, not an option.

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