

SANsymphony™-V Launch Frequently Asked Questions

Company Background

Q: Who is DataCore Software?

A: DataCore is singularly focused on the “Big Problem” plaguing virtualization projects today: the storage problem. Traditional approaches to storage are not cost effective and they simply cannot deliver the performance, availability, and redundancy required to support the demanding requirements of server and desktop virtualization. This is why so many virtualization initiatives fail – *storage costs often match or exceed the cost of the rest of the virtualization project.*

DataCore provides the industry’s only next-generation storage virtualization software solution that enables IT organizations to eliminate the “Big Problem”: storage-related barriers preventing them from realizing the financial and operational goals of their virtualization initiatives.

Q: What do you do?

A: Put simply, DataCore makes software that optimizes your storage infrastructure for the demanding requirements of server and desktop virtualization. Our products solve the “Big Problem” in server and desktop virtualization projects – the storage problem.

Traditional approaches to storage simply cannot cost-effectively deliver the performance, availability, and redundancy required to support the demanding requirements of server and desktop virtualization initiatives. And, most existing storage virtualization solutions are purpose-built for specific hardware devices or vendor brands and are limited to only virtualize identical device types. This makes them cost-prohibitive for server and desktop virtualization projects, since they require a new storage infrastructure to meet additional performance and high-availability demands or that the existing heterogeneous storage infrastructure be overhauled or replaced with a homogeneous one.

DataCore provides a software layer that endures over generations of hardware and enables customers to virtualize their entire storage infrastructure so they can repurpose and use existing resources more efficiently, and choose lower-cost alternatives when adding or purchasing new resources. DataCore’s solutions also enhance the infrastructure by enabling far greater performance, availability, and redundancy. Together, this makes DataCore the critical storage virtualization software layer that enables server and desktop virtualization projects to be successful.

Q: Is DataCore public or private; how long has it been in business; and who owns the company?

A: DataCore is privately held. It began business in 1998 as the industry’s first storage virtualization software company, and since that time, has established itself as a leader in optimizing storage infrastructures for server and desktop virtualization. DataCore is owned primarily by its founding team and its employees, together with several prominent venture capital firms including Insight Venture Partners, Flagship Ventures, and Udata Partners.

For more information on the company and the management team, please see:
www.datacore.com/Company/Corporate-Highlights.aspx.

Q: Who are your competitors, and how are you different?

A: DataCore is different because we are the only company truly taking a “software-as-infrastructure” approach to storage virtualization. This is the same approach that that VMware, Citrix, and Microsoft take for server and desktop virtualization. While some storage hardware vendors purport to sell “virtualization software,” it is a misnomer because they ‘lock-in’ or limit consumer choice from getting the ‘best deal’ available for storage devices and they won’t allow for heterogeneity, a major cornerstone of any true virtual infrastructure. An open software infrastructure that allows a mix of devices or brands runs counter to their core business proposition – selling their own hardware.

We believe our main competition is the traditional storage mindset, which is to “throw more hardware at the problem.” However, this mindset is disastrous in server and desktop virtualization, cloud computing, business continuity, and disaster recovery initiatives. It practically *guarantees* that the storage tier will blow the budget or cause severe performance and availability problems. Our main competitive challenge is convincing people that the move to virtualization requires a new storage mindset.

It is inevitable that a software infrastructure for storage will make the hardware choice less relevant over time. The anonymity to the user of the hardware chosen has already become the norm in virtual servers and desktop deployments. The hardware chosen, whether brand name or commodity, becomes a secondary consideration. If one is using VMware infrastructure, for instance, the choice of IBM, HP, Dell or Intel white box servers becomes more of a matter of personal preference or a ‘best deal’ consideration. This is the same approach DataCore takes – no more hardware “tail” wags infrastructure “dog.”

Q: Recently, there have been major, multi-billion dollar acquisitions of hardware companies in the storage virtualization space by HP, EMC, and Dell. What does this mean for DataCore?

A: It is transitional. It shows that the industry values storage virtualization technology and agrees that it is the “Big Problem” impacting virtualization and cloud infrastructures going forward. However, the “old model” approach these companies’ products embodied – locking in customers to a particular brand or device and thereby locking out competition and a customer’s freedom to choose – will give way to the software-as-infrastructure approach to storage virtualization. DataCore and many other industry experts see this as inevitable.

Q: Who are your customers?

A: Our products serve a wide variety of customers and industries. Today, many customers are involved in server or desktop virtualization projects, and it is in these projects in particular that DataCore products shine most brightly. In such projects, storage has tremendous impact on application availability and performance.

Virtualization projects consolidate many applications and virtual machines onto the same server hardware platforms and, therefore, aggregate the performance load and, because of the “many eggs in one basket” problem, demand a new level of business continuity. A storage virtualization software infrastructure also becomes the means to allow migration and mobility of workloads and virtual machines to be moved, restored as needed to keep businesses running without downtime. Therefore, it’s critical to virtualize the storage tier so it does not torpedo the entire virtualization project either through cost or technical issues.

For more information on DataCore customers, please see: www.datacore.com/Testimonials.aspx.

Q: What is the relationship between DataCore and its channel business partners? Who are your major alliance partners?

A: We are fully committed to our channel business partners. We have two-tier channel model and sell only through our indirect network of trained and authorized distributors and reseller partners. DataCore's virtualization solutions are strategic to our partners. DataCore advances their virtualization practices and benefits their entire hardware, software, and services portfolio by providing unprecedented return on investment to customers.

We have very strong alliances with the three major server and desktop virtualization players – Microsoft, Citrix, and VMware. We also have a wide range of other alliances within the industry to foster joint solutions to better address customer needs. These close working relationships lead to happier mutual customers and collaborative innovation.

Q: How do you see the long-term future of the company? Is there an exit strategy?

A: We are solving a huge problem for enterprises; we have thousands of customers worldwide and we continue to see strong, double-digit growth rates. We believe we have a very bright future, so we run our company to build its business, unlike fly-by-nighters that build to sell. Our "exit strategy" is to build a great company that is a leader in the industry – our view is that if we do that, the market will do the rest.

SANsymphony-V Announcement

Q: What is DataCore announcing?

A: We're launching our SANsymphony-V product, a next-generation storage virtualization software solution that solves the "Big Problem" stalling virtualization projects today: the storage problem. SANsymphony-V enables IT organizations to eliminate storage-related barriers preventing them from realizing the financial and operational goals of their virtualization initiatives.

Two years in development, SANsymphony-V allows data centers to use existing equipment and conventional storage devices to achieve the robust and responsive shared storage environment necessary to support highly dynamic virtual IT environments. This contrasts sharply with the expensive "rip and replace" approaches being proposed to support desktop and server virtualization projects.

Q: What are the most compelling user benefits for SANsymphony-V?

A: SANsymphony-V represents the foundation that DataCore is building on for our future. The most important benefit of SANsymphony-V is that it enables data centers to use existing equipment and conventional storage devices to achieve the robust and responsive shared storage environment necessary to support highly dynamic virtual IT environments. This contrasts sharply with the expensive "rip and replace" approaches being proposed to support desktop and server virtualization projects. It adds to this a modern and intuitive storage management system that makes it much easier to administer storage and manage it within an overall virtual infrastructure that encompasses virtual servers, desktops, and existing physical assets.

Additional key features include:

- **Cost Savings through software flexibility** to meet change, portability and device independence.
- **Fastest application response** by auto-tuning "mega caches" and selecting the best I/O paths.
- **High-availability stretched across rooms or off-site**, eliminating single points of failure and disruption through physical separation with full Auto-failover and Recovery capabilities that insure the highest levels of business continuity.
- **Optimum disk space utilization** through infrastructure-wide thin provisioning and pooling.
- **No downtime to repurpose and migrate systems and workloads** with DataCore's non-disruptive pass through capability that enables file systems and storage to be migrated.
- **Reduced administrative complexity and risk** through intuitive infrastructure-wide storage management, automation and wizard-like guided GUI.
- **Multi-site and bi-directional recovery management** of data and VMs across sites.
- **Time saving recovery** with Continuous Data Protection (CDP) to rapidly rollback in time and recover workloads and VMs.

Q: How does SANsymphony-V compare with previous DataCore solutions?

A: SANsymphony-V is our next generation, software-as-infrastructure platform that radically simplifies the job of managing and optimizing storage. It takes everything we've done and learned over the last 12 years in the storage virtualization business, plus a number of new innovations and key features, and then adds to it a truly remarkable user experience that is unmatched in the storage virtualization industry today.

Q: If this is such a big problem in the virtualization space, how are organizations solving it today without a solution like yours?

A: They aren't. In the context of desktop and server virtualization projects, they are stuck with two alternatives, both bad: either spending enormous sums of money to "rip and replace" their storage infrastructure, or downsizing, delaying, or abandoning their virtualization projects.

Q: When is SANsymphony-V available?

A: SANsymphony-V is available as of January 31, 2011.

Q: What is the official name of the product and what does the letter V and R stand for in the name SANsymphony-V R8?

A: The official name is SANsymphony-V Release 8.0. The letter V stands generically for virtualization and the R is shorthand for the term Release, this is similar to the naming convention adopted by Microsoft for Windows Server Hyper-V R2.

Q: Can you provide names of customers and/or partners who have completed product testing, purchased, or are in production?

A: The software is being shipped as of January 31, 2011. However we have had a number of customers and partners involved in our testing and we can supply names and contact information through our public relations agency, Davies Murphy Group.

Q: Can I talk to one of these customers or partners?

A: Our public relations agency, Davies Murphy Group, can help schedule that with you.

Q: How is SANsymphony-V being sold?

A: The product is now available and being sold through our network of trained and authorized distributors and reseller partners. For a worldwide listing, please see: www.datacore.com/Partners/Find-Solution-Providers.aspx.

Q: Is SANsymphony-V compatible with VMware ESX Server, Microsoft Hyper-V, and other server virtualization products?

A: Yes. DataCore products are certified solutions with all major virtualization vendors. For more information on this topic, please see: www.datacore.com/Software/Compatibility.aspx.

Q: Does SANsymphony-V run on Windows?

A: Yes. DataCore solutions install and use the Microsoft Windows Server 2008 R2 platform. The Windows Server platform allows DataCore solutions to more quickly support the newest technologies and the widest variety of devices in the marketplace.

It is important to note that while DataCore runs on a Windows platform it pools and manages storage resources for VMware, Citrix, Microsoft platforms as well as supporting storage consumers running any of the popular operating system platforms: Windows, Linux, UNIX, IBM AIX HP-UX, Solaris, MacOS, Novell and other open systems platforms.

Q: How are DataCore products licensed?

A: DataCore products are licensed on a per node basis and what is called "managed capacity," defined as the quantity of storage, in terabytes, that we manage and provision. DataCore licensing is not based on ports, channels, or SAN clients.

Q: *Is DataCore a hardware or appliance-based solution?*

A: DataCore products are software only solutions; however, resellers may combine hardware and DataCore software to qualify and sell DataCore solutions of their own.

Q: *What's the pricing of SANsymphony-V?*

A: Software licenses for a fully redundant, high-availability configuration start under \$10,000 U.S.D. including annual 24x7 technical support.

Q: *Are current SANmelody™ and SANsymphony™ customers eligible to upgrade to SANsymphony-V R8?*

A: DataCore customers running SANmelody or SANsymphony software whose needs can better be met by the capabilities of SANsymphony-V R8 may find it appealing to move to the new platform in the future. They should consult with their trusted solution providers for guidance.

Customers under current DataCore annual support contract are entitled to upgrade their SANmelody or SANsymphony licenses at no charge to the corresponding SANsymphony-V licenses.

Q: *Will DataCore be selling SANsymphony-V R8 in place of SANmelody™ 3.0 and SANsymphony 7.0 to new customers?*

A: Yes. SANsymphony-V R8 software addresses a wide range of requirements that were previously covered at the low and midrange by SANmelody 3.0 and at the higher end by SANsymphony 7.0 software. New customers may now start with SANsymphony-V in smaller configurations and grow it in place to satisfy very large requirements while keeping the same intuitive management interface, extensible feature set and licensing structure.

Industry Outlook

Q: How are the needs of today's data centers and their management evolving?

A: Most companies are riding the global economic rollercoaster. That means data center managers and their plans and budgets need to be more flexible while demands grow and budgets and resources decrease. In order to meet these new realities, data centers are evolving from manual and reactive to automated and proactive and are solidifying their position as strategic business assets.

Virtualization is the transformative technology in this evolution, helping data centers and businesses to:

- **Contain Costs and Boost Productivity** – Through consolidation of desktops, servers and storage, companies are realizing greater cost savings and productivity gains from centralized management and automation.
- **Mitigate Business Risk** – Via improved business continuity and disaster recovery.
- **Protect Investments** – Extend the useful life of investments and enhancing business agility through software infrastructures that survive the useful lives of physical devices as they “come and go” over time.

In short, virtualization now has three dimensions – desktop, server, and storage virtualization – and each has become strategic to business success.

Q: What is fueling this change?

A: The four economic drivers of this change are:

1. Cost containment
2. Productivity
3. Risk mitigation
4. Extension of the useful life of investments and enhancement of business agility

Q: What is the role of storage in terms of achieving these business objectives? What opportunities does it offer?

A: Storage has become one of the largest cost centers in IT. And it continues to grow – with disk capacity needs doubling on average every year. Therefore, the same economic drivers leading to desktop and server virtualization apply equally to storage.

In the context of virtualization projects, storage requirements include both the company's data and all of its virtual machine images. With a traditional storage infrastructure, these images are all physically stored on disk, which can rapidly bog down the infrastructure. With virtual storage infrastructure, these virtual machines are stored on virtual disks that can be readily motioned, migrated and replicated as needed to enable a new level of performance, agility, business continuity, and disaster recovery.

Today, virtualization is focused on the efficient implementation of performance, availability and redundancy in the virtualized infrastructure. Traditional storage approaches, or single-vendor virtualization approaches, simply do not deliver the capabilities required to cost-effectively support the needs of the modern data center. Only heterogeneous storage virtualization provides the flexibility and performance characteristics required to enable a high-performance, high-availability and fault-tolerant virtualized infrastructure.

Q: What are the future challenges in this market and how does DataCore intend to respond?

A: There are three major challenges in the near future:

1. **Understanding that virtualization projects and infrastructure deployments are 3-dimensional:** While servers and desktops garner much attention, storage represents a disproportionately large share of recurring capital expenditures and a constant source of upheaval in the data center. By virtualizing storage across pools of tiered storage devices, DataCore overcomes incompatibilities among different generations, models, and manufacturers to maximize their combined value.
2. **Bringing virtualization to the masses:** While VMware is still the dominant solution in larger scale enterprises, Citrix desktops and Microsoft Hyper-V have created a new wave of virtualized desktop users especially in the midmarket. These users are looking to go beyond print and web server virtualization and incorporate core applications like Exchange and SQL. With the enormous population of Microsoft Windows users beginning to embrace and expand their virtualization initiatives, this trend promises to create a storage crisis among enterprises.

Independent software vendors like DataCore that provide robust solutions that run seamlessly within Microsoft environments and handle SANs as a logical extension of the Microsoft operating system make storage management much easier and will be very well-positioned to meet the new Microsoft wave of users ready to consume virtualization solutions.

3. **As virtual servers become mainstream there must be a greater emphasis on getting the storage piece right:** Today, the real focus of concern is not so much about virtualizing servers but more about, "Can my virtualized infrastructure deliver the performance, availability and business-continuity capabilities required to support my business?" This is bringing storage to the forefront of the virtualization discussion, due to its critical role in delivering acceptable system performance and availability, and in protecting the data and the VMs for business continuity. This will become an even greater focus of IT solutions providers as well as IT directors well into the future.