

Tuesday, June 12. 2007

Infoworld: Sun ZFS breaks all the rules

Paul Venezia wrote an interesting article about ZFS: it's not every day that the computer industry delivers the level of innovation found in Sun's ZFS. More and more advances in the science of IT are based on simply multiplying the status quo. ZFS breaks all the rules here, and it arrives in an amazingly well-thought-out and nicely implemented solution. This is the kind of engineering that made Sun a powerhouse. The achievement of ZFS certainly portends well for a company that might just be pulling itself back from also-ran status and into the limelight once more.

Posted by Joerg Moellenkamp in English, Solaris at 07:18

ZFS is great technology - no question.

However, I wish that by now the merits of ZFS were as clear to all of Sun as they truly are.

Two things that continue to puzzle me:

1. Still no ZFS boot and also no ZFS install for Solaris. Currently, the only way (and only on x86) is by using the latest OpenSolaris. And even then, the machine won't come up if a mirror is missing or electronically dead. Good grief!

It's not unlikely that Apple will actually beat Sun in this.

2. Sun sells almost no hardware that ZFS is a good match for. The Thumper and the V445 with its 8 drive bays are the sole exceptions.

Most Sun system nowadays have two drive bays. Without ZFS install and boot, running these machines with ZFS is a PITA - at least if you don't maintain dozens of identical configurations.

JBOD? The 3511 is EOL. The 3510 is really a bit expensive for a JBOD unit and IMO was never really designed for JBOD use - you can't even monitor enclosure FRUs without the HW raid controller. Also, the 3510 won't be far away from EOL now that the 2530/2540 are out. Same for the SCSI-based 3320.

And, since the 2530/40 are not available as JBOD, this leaves... um, yes, the Thumper.

Yes, I do think Sun's storage division could stand some improvement.
Anonymous on Jun 12 2007, 09:42

1. Regarding the problem of the missing JBODS: All I can say to this, is that the problem is known, we work on this and it will change soon.

2. Regarding ZFS boot: The problem of ZFS boot is not its technical feasibility, it's the problem of doing it in a way without breaking a single non-deprecated feature. Sometimes, the binary compatibility guarantee makes simple tasks much harder.
Anonymous on Jun 12 2007, 09:54