

STORAGE SWITZERLAND BRIEFING NOTE

The Time may be Right for Digitiliti's Universal Archive Platform



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Most organizations have many different applications that handle and store unstructured data, like email, document imaging, general file storage, etc, often with separate storage. Some even have an 'integrated' infrastructure, where management or operations of these applications are consolidated to some degree. [Digitiliti's Universal Archive Platform](#) (UAP) takes a different approach. It unifies unstructured data in a content-aware archive system that combines the functions of storage management and information management for all these applications into one virtualized repository. It consolidates hardware and improves storage efficiency with embedded global deduplication (across applications), compression and automated storage tiering. It can also improve productivity and increase the business value of data through content indexing, improved collaboration and data governance.

Digitiliti's UAP consists of an Information Director, an Archive Store and a software agent for each client computer or server. The Information Director is a 1U or 2U x86-based appliance that's synchronized with Active Directory and configured with the email server. It captures email activity via compliance/journaling support without an agent so it's 'email agnostic'. When first installed it can be

implemented to scan the network for files and build a metadata repository of file attributes that can be searched, providing a complete data characterization model before ingesting files themselves. When a file is ingested, the system performs deduplication at the client, the director and the off-site vault dynamically, while it builds a content-index to support more detailed keyword searching. After the initial ingestion process, the system "enrolls" subsequent files individually as they're saved or closed, similar to the way a continuous data protection process works. Instead of running a periodic batch rescan to stay updated, this method enables the system to capture more data about each file without impacting performance or workflow, while minimizing network bandwidth used. It also supports encryption for all file movement to safeguard contents if required.

Through this enrollment process the UAP builds a dynamic archive of unstructured data that's the most active and removes unused files when local cache limits are reached. But all files are maintained at the Archive Store, which is connected to the Information Director. This means that over time data is tiered without intervention, freeing up that capacity for other purposes.

The Archive Store is a scale-out cluster of storage modules, each with its own processors and capacity. Using an object-based file system architecture, these nodes can be located in the same data center or geographically dispersed. They can also be located in Digitiliti's cloud data center. Implementation of the UAP typically starts with a single application, like email archiving. Once the system is in place, other data sets can be migrated over to it, as familiarity and confidence with the system grows.

Storage Swiss Take

There's a lot of logic to combining unstructured data storage and especially capturing metadata and information about those files in a unified system. The proliferation of point-products in the IT space has increased complexity and resource consumption, so it makes sense that consolidating the storage for applications that use file data could improve efficiency and drive down costs. But we've been here before. Consolidated archive systems are not a completely new idea, for sure; however, some things have changed. Now we have technologies like deduplication, plus powerful commodity hardware and the cloud. In addition, new uses for (Big) data and the requirements for legal and corporate compliance may make the time right for a unified archive platform.

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