An Early Look at Veritas Velocity

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Abstract: Veritas Velocity will be generally available in late 2016. The initial release is still a few months out, but it's already possible to gauge its relevance against what IT organizations need help with today. Workload administrators are becoming more involved in all sorts of data management tasks as they struggle with myriad copies being created—all for the right business reasons. To address this development, Veritas is combining its sophisticated approaches to data management with its broader ability to deliver superior data protection and information availability in order to offer something revolutionary.

Introduction

As business units’ requirements for IT agility continue to expand and diversify, workload administrators (i.e., database administrators, file administrators, and others) have become more involved in every aspect of data protection and data management (see Figure 1). This trend toward more direct involvement is logical, considering the deep insights that DBAs and other workload admins have about the platforms and datasets that they are responsible for.

FIGURE 1. Database Administrators’ Level of Involvement with Data Protection

When it comes to your organization’s data protection technologies, processes, and strategy for its production database platforms, which of the following statements about database administrators (DBAs) is most accurate? (Percent of respondents, N=305)

- No data protection tools and processes for production databases are handled by DBAs (i.e., DBAs are not at all involved with data protection), 2%
- Some data protection tools and processes for production databases are handled by DBAs, 15%
- Most data protection tools and processes for production databases are handled by DBAs, 42%
- All data protection tools and processes for production databases are exclusively handled by DBAs, 40%

Source: Enterprise Strategy Group, 2016

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1 Source: ESG Research Report, Data Protection Personas and Methods, February 2015.
Indeed, ESG research reveals the same dynamic occurring with virtualization administrators and managers of unstructured file storage systems. Workload administrators are becoming more influential and involved in the data protection/data management lifecycle, which has driven an increase in their consumption of workload-specific tools for data management. ESG is seeing an upward trend related to leveraging specific data management tools for non-database workloads as well. Essentially, evidence seems to indicate that both role-specific administrators and workload-specific tools are rising in relevance.2

**But What About All Those Copies?**

The broad-based activity of data management encompasses—even from a single-workload perspective—myriad copies created to support both data protection initiatives and non-data protection initiatives (i.e., test/dev and analytics), not to mention the production copy used by the workforce. *With so many copies (see Figure 2),³ things can become unwieldy.*

**FIGURE 2. Number of Copies of Production Data Created***

![Graph showing the number of copies of production data created](source: Enterprise Strategy Group, 2015)

Unfortunately, while most of those copies provide business value to workload administrators, IT ops teams, and people across the organization, they often cause acute storage-consumption problems and are costly to the business in terms of both retention and management. Copy data management (CDM) is the industry term describing the double-edged challenge of (1) ensuring various operating units have access to the copy(ies) of data they need, and (2) reducing that rampant storage growth. **But the problem is bigger than CDM. It isn’t about the copies and storage itself; it’s about ensuring the agility and access of all of those who can create value for the business—and doing it in a non-intrusive and cost-sustainable way.**

In short, the key challenges for the IT organization all center on how to:

- Justify the storage infrastructure and investments they already have in place, as well as what they must scale up for the near-term future.
- Enable diverse business units to gain access to the data they need efficiently and without laborious efforts.
- Reduce the time needed to access data copies.
- Lower the risks, costs, and complexity associated with creating and managing a great deal of copy data.

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² ibid.
An Early Look at Veritas Velocity

Of the few vendors in IT with a comprehensive understanding of both data management and data protection, Veritas repeatedly has led innovation toward “what next-generation data management and data protection are.” That effort includes more than two decades of offering enterprise-centric data protection (NetBackup), unstructured file management (Enterprise Vault), storage and systems availability (InfoScale, formerly known as Veritas Cluster Server and Veritas Storage Foundation), and recent releases that are more workload specific, such as Veritas NetBackup Copilot as a database-optimized approach for holistic protection and recovery.

The Veritas Velocity Early Adopter Preview (for Oracle)

Similar to the manner in which Copilot is a workload-centric extension for data protection, Veritas Velocity is an equally exciting parallel offering representing several strides forward in workload-savvy data management. Veritas plans to deliver an early adopter preview (EAP) of Velocity in calendar Q2 of 2016, with significantly enhanced functionality planned for general release later in 2016. Initially, the EAP will focus on one of the most daunting copy data management scenarios facing IT today—test/dev enablement within Oracle environments. Veritas states that it is designing the GA version to support other workloads as well, including non-database workloads.

Key elements of the anticipated Velocity solution include:

- A web-based, cloud-hosted management console that enables role-based management by various solution administrators and DBAs who need rapid and better access to data.

- An appliance to facilitate the solution itself.

FIGURE 3. Veritas’ Vision for Velocity (not all is covered by Early Adopter Preview)

During its early adopter preview period, Velocity will be a standalone platform. But, considering the continuing evolution of the Veritas NetBackup line and the recent introduction of Veritas Copilot for Oracle, ESG expects some of the Veritas
technologies to eventually converge into a powerful, unique set of functionality that will empower a broad set of DBAs, data management admins, data protection admins, test/dev teams, application owners, and others who need agile and sustainable access to their data. Veritas is already talking about leveraging the integration points of its products to help existing NetBackup customers prepare for the future of cloud usage and leverage the advantages of more fluid data management.

For now, Veritas is aiming at what is arguably the least-well-served audience for its traditional data protection offerings—the testing and development teams. Initially, Velocity will ingest data into its appliance or virtual appliance, and then offer the data outward to the test/dev teams that need access to the most recent version(s) of the database as ingested. Test/dev teams traditionally had to request copies of databases that were being managed through IT operations or invoke them via a help desk request. With Velocity, they will be able to gain immediate, convenient access directly from the data store or via an NFS mount through RMAN. This advancement could overcome a classic challenge that needs to be addressed by any CDM architecture, and it is a sensible way to first experience Velocity:

- Test/dev teams will get a chance to gain agility through this early preview, discovering Veritas in the process.
- Veritas will gain some huge learnings, as they prepare for a broader range of scenarios closer to final release.
- The industry will get a taste of data management and protection convergence from one of its biggest influencers.

**The Bigger Truth**

It is interesting and exciting to see one of the de facto enterprise data protection vendors innovating in newer parts of the data protection and management realm. Building on its pedigree of long-term data retention and recovery, combined with its recognition that the IT landscape is changing (including a growing emphasis on workload-centric data protection, availability, and management), Veritas seems well suited to combine its approach to copy data management and its broader ability to deliver data management, protection/preservation, and information availability.

ESG expects Velocity to start many unexpected conversations in 2016, with the final-release product (including more potential integration and delivery scenarios) to be a catalyst for the enablement of better data usage, data management, and recovery in the future.