

Interesting results from a Vision Solutions survey

I'm always watching for stats and numbers in the industry. We are continuously presented with the "fastest growing" and "x% better than the competitor" based on a number of sometimes skewed statistics. While I love what information I can gather from statistics for hardware and software, it is almost always based on sales.

When I was given some statistics recently by my friends at Vision Solutions, I really dug in because these numbers presented some interesting views on what is happening in the technology. Of course, I know that even these numbers may be open to a certain amount of interpretation, but hopefully you can read some of the same information that I have from it.

Consistency across the results

This survey was done using 985 respondents who ranged in company size. Here is the description of the survey participants:



The interesting thing is that we see information which is contrary to much of what is trending in the world of marketing IT solutions. It isn't that all-flash, or public cloud, or any of the specific big trends aren't real. What it does show is that there is a big representation of the "middle class" of technology consumers.

- 51% indicated that storage growth was between 10-30% per year
- Replication features was nearly even at 39% for hardware and 35% for software
- Tape isn't dead - 81% of respondents use tape as part of their data protection solution

There are more details throughout, but these jumped out at me in particular.

Test the plan, don't plan the test

A frightening number that came from the survey was that 83% of respondents had no plan, or were less than 100% confident that their current plan was complete, tested and ready to execute. One word reaction to this: Wow!



As Mike Tyson said: "Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the mouth". Many people that I have spoken to have a long lead up to their BCP/DR test and a significant portion of the planning is one-time activities to ensure the test goes well, but just to satisfy the test, not necessarily to build a self-healing infrastructure which is where we should be working towards.

To date, one of my most popular blog post series is my BCP/DR Primer:

BCP/DR Primer - An introduction to planning your IT recovery strategy Part [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)

This is a clear sign in my mind that people are continually looking for resources and tools to build, or

re-evaluate their BCP plan. Since I'm a Double-Take user, the combination of all this hits pretty close to home. I've been using products with online testing capability for a number of years which helps to increase the confidence for me and my team that we are protected in the event of a significant business disruption at the primary data center.

Enterprises love their pets

✘ With years of work in Financial Services and enterprise business environments, I get to see the other side of the "pets versus cattle" debate which is the abundance of pets in a corporate data center. Sometimes I even think the cattle have names too.

Legacy application environments are a reality. Not every existing application has been or will be developed as a fully distributed n-tier application. There are a significant number of current and future applications that are still deployed in the traditional model with co-located servers, single instances, and other architectural challenges that don't allow for the "cloudy" style of failure.

There is nothing wrong with this environment for the people who are mapped to this model today. Most organizations are actively redesigning applications and rethinking their development practices, but the existence of legacy products and servers is a reality for some time to come.

Evolving application and data protection

I'm a fan of Double-Take, so I'm a little biased when I see great content from Vision Solutions ☐ What I take away from this is that there are a lot of us who may not have the ideal plan in place, or may not have an effective plan in place at all for a BCP situation. The content of seeing people's preparation is only half of the story.



Having a plan is one thing, but seeing what the results of real data loss and the reason behind it is particularly important. Using manual processes is definitely a fast track to issues.

Beyond orchestration, the next step I recommend is using CDP (Continuous Data Protection) where possible. My protected content (servers, volumes and folders) are asynchronously replicated, plus I take daily snapshots for full servers and semi-hourly snapshots of file data. This ensures that multiple RPOs (Recovery Point Objectives).

In the event of a data corruption, the corruption would be immediately replicated...by design of the protection tool. Using a previous RPO snapshot prevents the risk of a total data loss by using an automated snapshot. Phew!

Ultimately, the onus is on us to enhance the plan, build the process, and evaluate the tools. If you want to find out more on how I've done data and server protection, please feel free to reach out to me (eric at discoposse dot com) and if you want to find out more on the Vision Solutions portfolio and Double-Take, you can go right to the source at <http://www.VisionSolutions.com> and there are some great whitepapers and resources there to help out.

Double-Take 7.0: Now with 100% More PowerShell!

For customers of Double-Take Availability by Vision Solutions, you have enjoyed lots of features and functionality which have personally saved my bacon in DR situations over the years.

In Q1 of 2013 I was given a road-map presentation for the new Double-Take 7.0 product line with more optimization and a bunch of new features. With every road-map session, with any vendor, the first thing I ask is: "Do you support scripting with PowerShell?". On that day, it was with great joy that I was given the answer I've wanted for a few years: "Yes!"

With the new release of 7.0 there is now a full set of PowerShell CmdLets for managing the Double-Take environment, so for any heavy users of automation and scripting (myself included) there is now an even better way to get the most out of Double-Take.

93 New Ways to Be Awesome

Coming from the DTCLI (Double-Take Command Line Interface) from previous versions, the new DT PowerShell environment is a stunning expansion on the management capability. There are 93 new CmdLets packaged in the module and numerous accessible classes to make the scripting capability an important part of the overall product strength.

Once you've installed your Double-Take 7.0 product on your server, you open your PowerShell window and enter the following command:

```
Import-Module "C:\Program Files\Vision Solutions\Double-Take\Console\DoubleTake.PowerShell.dll"
```



As long as you receive no errors, you are now working with the new module loaded. If you want to reference the CmdLet help, you can consult the 422 page PDF...no, seriously, the entire help environment is available for reference both in PDF and in the traditional method of using Get-Help *CmdLet* method:



Time to get your PowerShell on!

I encourage you to get the Double-Take 7.0 product downloaded and start to looking at what you can do with PowerShell and the Double-Take environment now. I'll put together more posts to help with more detailed configuration. Using these methods you can really re-think how you manage the platform and it can now be rolled into the orchestration side of your environment which will be a really great value addition to the Double-Take portfolio in my opinion.

[Welcome Vision Solutions to the DiscoPosse family!](#)

✘ As a long time customer of the Double-Take product family, I'm proud to announce that Vision Solutions is joining the ranks as a sponsor for DiscoPosse.com. For those who haven't already been exposed to Vision Solutions, stay tuned as I'll be bringing you an introductory post in the coming days.

Double-Take Product Family

If the name Vision Solutions seems new, it may be because you've known them more for their premier data and server protection product Double-Take. Double-Take comes in a variety of flavours including Double-Take Availability, Double-Take RecoverNow and Double-Take Move.

Currently at version 6.0, the Double-Take family of products provides near-zero RPO protection of your Windows and Linux servers in a variety of configurations. What makes Double-Take stand apart from many of its competitors is the ability to protect both physical and virtual environments.



Coming Soon - Double-Take 7.0!

Even as I write this, there are exciting announcements on the horizon from Vision with their upcoming Double-Take version 7.0 which will be in general availability by Q2 of 2013.

Take a look in the mean time at the Double-Take datasheets and visit <http://www.visionsolutions.com> for more information and to contact the sales and support teams for any and all questions you may have.



[Toronto VMUG: November 6th Event Recap](#)

✘ It was another great VMUG session at the November 6th half-day Toronto VMUG at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. It turned out to be a Toronto VMUG first with a remote presenter as a result of some of the aftermath of hurricane Sandy.

I have to start by giving kudos to Angelo Luciani ([@AngeloLuciani](#)) for not only putting together a great event, but for coming up with a phenomenal recovery plan when a vendor was unable to travel to present at the event. Plus, we've laid the groundwork to open the doors for future remote presenters which is a great opportunity for the VMUG members to get access to more great content.

Because we had internet access in the venue this time we were able to watch the VMworld 2012 keynote speech with Steve Herrod ([@Herrod](#) on Twitter) which was a great warm up for some VMUG goodness.

✖ First up in the day was Mike from VMware to bring us up to speed on the vCloud Suite features, editions and changes which came to market between VMworld San Francisco and VMworld Barcelona. It was a great chance to see the overview of new features and a reminder that all VMware customers should get in touch with their reseller ASAP to take advantage of the great licensing deals available until December 15th!

Next to present was McAfee ([@McAfee](#) on Twitter - <http://www.mcafee.com>) with a session on their virtualization security offerings. The presentation covered a lot of ground and once again hammered home the ✖ need for us as designers, implementers and administrators to latch onto the SDDC (Software Defined Data Center) concept as it is the inevitable future for many companies as virtualization expands and cloud computing becomes more widely accepted.

The McAfee solution covers the bases although for the audience it sparked a lot of questions about the application to smaller environments and how the solutions adapt to “less compliant” server builds. Preetham and the team who came for the presentation fielded the questions well and the impact was good in that it created conversation about design. In my opinion, the key to looking forward is knowing where we are coming from.

✖ Pure Storage ([@PureStorage](#) on Twitter - <http://www.purestorage.com>) took the stage so to speak, with a great GoTo Meeting from California to talk about their all-flash array offering. Pure Storage is leading the way in the flash storage space by pushing past the idea of “hybrid storage” and moving right to the all-flash array deployment which is a winning design from what I’ve seen.

The challenge with the all-flash deployment as you can imagine is price. With spinning disk storage coming at around 1\$ per GB and auto-tiering hybrid solutions not too much over that, the idea of moving up to 5-10\$ per GB is quite a jump. The pitch for Pure Storage is that the usable space brings that price close to 5\$ per GB with the implementation of de-duplication.

Again, the key thing about knowing whether Pure Storage is appropriate for your organization is to engage them and do some analysis to find where it is the right fit. An interesting product and I hope to see more from them in the future.

Lastly in the presentation was little old me! More than anything I have to thank Vision Solutions and Veeam Software for all of the help and support to bring great products to the market and some really cool giveaways for the VMUG members. My presentation was titled **BCP for VMware Environments: Double-Take, Veeam and vSphere Replication**. The presentation was meant to show some real-world examples where I’ve deployed these products and to talk about how different levels of each solution are available.

While I presented 3 products (Double-Take Availability, Veeam Backup Free Edition, vSphere 5.1 Replication), it was meant as what I call an Apples to Bananas to Oranges comparison. The goal was not to pit the products against each other, but to show how each type of implementation can be used and how they can be all brought together as part of your overall BCP program.

Don’t forget to take a look at some of my BCP resources here on the site, including the 5 part BCP Primer post for those who are keen on getting involved with a BCP program at their organization: [BCP/DR Primer Series](#)

I hope that everyone there had a great time and that the content was worthwhile. I was able to have lunch with Angelo and Ryan who was another VMUG member. Plus lots of time to chat with Mike Preston (@mwpreston - <http://www.mikepreston.net>).

Here is the slide deck I used for the presentation. Because I brought this as a real-world example of tools used for BCP, there was much more content that was spoken about than written. If you would like to see more, just let me know and I'd be happy to walk you through what I've done with BCP in various situations.

See you all at the next event!