Since March, we have been exploring the ['new economics' driving storage investment decisions](), and specifically the role storage hypervisors may play in the new landscape. While we expected skills availability to be a potential barrier to adopting change, there were some surprises in store too. While acknowledging potential for software to take over routine tasks, and external experts to help when appropriate, storage architects, systems administrators and their managers cited several examples that underscored the need for an increasingly complex set of skills and experience to be infrastructure custodians. Three common scenarios were mostly reflective of barriers towards further server virtualization, but were nonetheless top of mind when discussing storage options. Commonly cited were:

1. application owners and/or managers preferring physical resources on grounds of speed or ease-of-use. Mostly this is dealt with through chargebacks that reflect respective costs, but in some cases, it has been necessary to run benchmarks to assure no performance sacrifice. Credibility within the infrastructure team, and authority to negotiate were both necessary.
2. some vendors' licensing is significantly more expensive for virtual implementation. Usually this requires educating procurement, application sponsors and maybe even the vendor. Here again, the weight of governance and authority were required to carry through mandate
3. requirement to use custom piece of hardware, like a line card or a licensing dongle. Less frequent but often enough to be an issue, needing similar combination of knowledge and authority.

So while virtualization technology suppliers are busy building management software suites to reduce routine administration burden, and enhancing their consulting, support and education portfolios, the number of virtualization related issues are not diminishing. Infrastructure managers remain busy negotiating internally, and need to demonstrate skill, experience, credibility and authority. As internal discussions are the most tricky to delegate, more pricing pressure is likely to be brought to bear on traditional services. This pressure will be in addition to the 'new economics' we expect from implementation of storage hypervisors. Services business managers should brace themselves for more turbulence.

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