zVT | MAINFRAME VIRTUAL TAPE

SAFEGUARDING INVESTMENT IN z SYSTEMS

On 12 July 2011, IBM announced that the IBM zEnterprise 196 and the IBM zEnterprise 114 would be the last System z servers to support ESCON channels. "IBM plans to not offer ESCON channels as an orderable feature on System z servers that follow the z196 (machine type 2817) and z114 (machine type 2818). In addition, ESCON channels cannot be carried forward on an upgrade to such follow-on servers. This plan applies to channel path identifier (CHPID) types CNC, CTC, CVC, and CBY and to features 2323 and 2324".

In preparation for this announcement, IBM Z and Optica Technologies collaborated to deliver the exclusive Prizm FICON to ECSON converter technology to facilitate a process to prepare customers for the termination of ESCON channels on the mainframe. This process recommended Prizm planning and implementation in advance of the z System upgrade that would simplify the transition to the next IBM Z platform while consolidating ESCON infrastructure and operations.

Optica was delighted to work with IBM Z on this strategic initiative, and subsequently converted thousands of channel connections globally via their Prizm solution to safeguard and preserve the application and infrastructure investment for hundreds of global customers. Over time, Optica gained valuable customer insight around mainframe tape and tape operations as over 70% of the devices connected to Prizm were tape, virtual tape or devices that act like tape. As part of this experience, Optica identified the need for a flexible, affordable virtual tape solution to satisfy the requirements of a wide variety of IBM Z customers.

DELIVERING A FLEXIBLE VIRTUAL TAPE SOLUTION

Over the last decade, consolidation of FICON infrastructure has been constant, but there has also been a significant consolidation in the mainframe virtual tape market. IBM acquired Diligent Technologies, including their Virtual Tape for Mainframe (VTFM) product. EMC acquired Bus-Tech and their MDL technology, repackaging and rebranding the solution as DLm. StorageTek was acquired by Sun and then Sun was acquired by Oracle. The unintended consequence of this Merger & Acquisition (M&A) activity was the abundance of ultra-high-end Enterprise Class Mainframe Virtual Tape Library (VTL) solutions serving a market that is smaller than $1B.

As disk drive capacities have continued to increase, the cost, complexity and capacity of these ultra-high-end Enterprise Class VTL solutions (I.E. DLm, TS7700, VSM) have moved beyond the reach (and requirements) of a large segment of mainframe customers.

Optica leveraged its extensive mainframe customer experience with FICON and ESCON channel connectivity (Prizm) to create the zVT family of mainframe virtual tape products. As with Prizm, Optica has taken great care and pride in designing and engineering an Enterprise Class set of solutions that are flexible, easy to implement and reasonably priced. The zVT 5000-FLEX connects to a customer's preferred choice of IP or FC-based storage with no impact to tape management and/or tape operations. The zVT 5000-iNAS is an integrated solution which scales from 8TB to 1PB of RAW NFS storage capacity in a single floor tile. Additionally, based on customer feedback, Optica also offers the zVT 3000i as a complete "virtual tape in a box" solution, delivering a fully integrated, self-contained and turnkey solution in a single 2U footprint for customers with more modest virtual tape requirements.

COMMITTED TO DELIVERING VALUE

As a privately-owned company, Optica has been the exclusive provider of protocol conversion solutions to IBM Z customers since 2002. We take pride in the quality of products and the value-add that we deliver to the IBM Z marketplace. Prizm provides IBM Z customers the flexibility and time required to safeguard their IBM z System platform investment and manage End of Marketing (EOM) and End of Support (EOS) challenges in a reasonable way.

Now is an excellent time to learn more about the attractive options we can offer with the zVT family of mainframe virtual tape solutions. In addition, Optica offers comprehensive end-to-end services, including the migration of tape data from your incumbent legacy solution, to the fully supported zVT solution. Optica has been a successful, privately-owned company for more than 50 years, and we remain committed to investing and improving our flagship zVT products for the continued benefit of our valued customer base.

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