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Enterprise Strategy Group (ESG) research reveals IT teams are putting their infrastructures--and businesses-- at risk by not profiling application workloads and testing storage systems before purchase and deployment.



The study is co-sponsored by Virtual Instruments, and involves 412 IT professionals. It shows 59% of respondents do not profile workloads before buying a storage system, while 44% do not trust the advice of either storage vendors or VARs regarding the right solution. Such a situation can at best lead to over-provisioning and wasted spending, and at worst to new storage solutions unable to keep up with business requirements.

Making such lack of insight even worse is a failure to gauge the performance of a storage solution before it is put to work. Only 29% of companies conduct on-premises load testing before buying their next storage system, and another 11% would work with vendors or partners to conduct load testing before deciding on a purchase.

“Assuming that upgrading to flash-based storage will solve all data-related application performance issues is a myth,” ESG says. “Application performance is heavily impacted by the I/O characteristics and patterns employed by the application itself and its interactions with other applications that might be sharing the same, invariably virtualised, infrastructure. How each vendor has designed its all-flash arrays to handle the plethora of different workloads varies greatly. Five-fold performance differences or more are not uncommon for the same identical workload.”

That said, storage performance and availability remain top priority-- 70% of respondents plan to establish service level agreements (SLAs) for performance and/or availability, and 43% will have performance-related SLAs. To ensure performance and availability, 94% use monitoring

tools, with 54% using vendor-independent monitoring.

Storage deployment decisions are technically important for the majority (or at least 74% of respondents), yet just 16% involve application owners in the storage deployment process. This is a missed opportunity, since collaboration between storage and application teams brings a better understanding of overall infrastructure.

“Vendors can also benefit from this research,” Virtual Instruments concludes. “The results offer direction as to where they should be focusing their efforts. Vendors that make performance a priority and leverage both load testing and monitoring will set the bar for the rest of the industry.”

Go Lack of Testing Putting IT Infrastructures at Risk