



Solution-Soft Recasts Compression as Data Transfer Tool

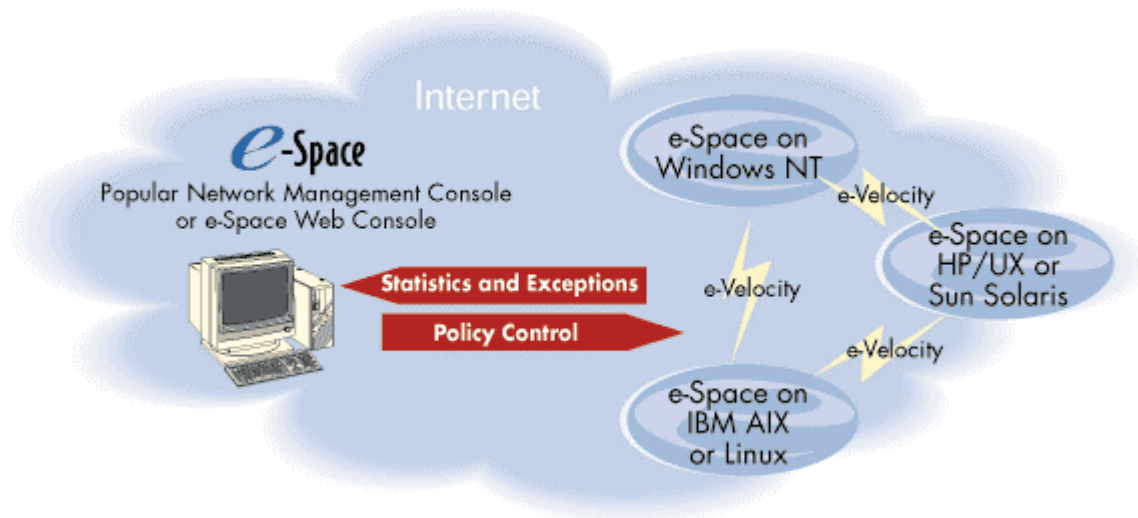
Speed, Security Touted as Improvement Over Traditional FTP

Article by Christopher Bucholtz

Having provided a solution for compressing data to more efficiently use storage, Solution-Soft is turning its attention to moving that data from device to device.

The San Jose, Calif.-based Solution-Soft has bolstered its product line with e-Velocity, a policy-based network transfer solution that, by using some of the features and technologies of Solution-Soft's e-Space storage optimization solution (January 2000 HP World, page 23), makes use of dynamic compression to increase data transfer speeds and use less bandwidth.

Managing e-Velocity File Transfers



A central management console sets policies for file transfers between platforms.

"This solution is built for business," said Paul Wang, president and CEO of Solution-Soft. "It is policy-based, has added security components, and can compress and decompress on the fly."

In the past, most file transfers have been done with the venerable file transfer protocol (FTP), which Wang characterized as "old, slow, and not secure at all." Since data transfer is a natural component of any large-scale distributed storage system, Wang said file transfers were a natural territory to expand into.

Even more lucrative are transfers between different platforms in heterogeneous environments. "With our Web console, you can set policies across different platforms," said Wang.

To increase transfer speed, the system uses a threaded processing strategy and can compress

and decompress files automatically, coding to a set of user-determined policies. When employed with e-Space, the system can transfer compressed files in an as-is condition and then decompress them on the new systems.

Transmission is also accelerated by delta transmission. This feature, to be added to the e-Velocity product by midyear, enables only the relative, unique portions of the data file to be transferred. The e-Velocity solution has the capability to automatically reconnect and resume transfer from the point of interruption if a connection drops, making e-Velocity useful for instant file transfer and file synchronization to address Internet bandwidth and network congestion issues.

"Transferring a very large file can take a long time, and any interruption in that transfer has meant starting from the beginning with FTP," said Wang. With automatic recovery, transfers can resume from the point at which they were interrupted, further accelerating the transfer process.

The gains in time the system can bring are impressive. A database that took two hours to transfer with FTP and a T-1 line can take as little as 90 seconds with e-Velocity.

Although performance provides e-Velocity's flash, security may be what earns its cash. For Solution-Soft's target market of large companies, keeping transfers from becoming weak spots in their computing environment is a critical concern.

"With FTP, passwords are too easy to steal," said Wang, "so we encode the passwords. Sub-processes in FTP are easy to attack with Trojan horses, take control of, and use to invoke other programs, so we don't use any sub-processes. Character buffers are always cleared, and boundaries are always checked to foil hacking. Basically, anything we were aware of as a vulnerability, we left out or secured."

Management is based around a simple command-line interface similar to that used in standard FTP, along with an intuitive graphical interface.

The e-Velocity software is currently available on the HP-UX and MPE platforms and will be available in the first quarter of this year on Windows NT. Pricing starts at \$349 for a Windows NT server and \$799 for a UNIX server. Client pricing starts at \$119 for a single license.

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