Nominee: Nimble Storage

Nomination title: SSD / Flash Storage Product of the Year: Nimble Storage CS-Series Arrays

The Nimble Storage CS-Series arrays deliver the right mix of high performance and efficient capacity for mainstream workloads in IT organisations of all sizes.

Like all storage systems that leverage flash, the CS-Series relies on a solid-state disk to provide ample performance for demanding, IOPS-intensive applications, coupled with lower-cost spinning disks for scale-out capacity. However, Nimble's proprietary Cache-Accelerated Sequential Layout architecture (CASL™) takes things one step further.

Through CASL™, any Nimble Storage CS-Series array can be scaled to enterprise-levels of performance and capacity. This non-disruptive scaling of performance and capacity can help eliminate storage silos and their corresponding poor utilisation and management complexity.

Nimble Storage arrays also come standard with full software functionality, so there are no hidden costs. Key features of the arrays include:

- Dynamic caching
- Write-optimised data layout
- App-aligned block size
- Universal compression
- Thin provisioning
- Instant snapshots
- WAN-efficient replication
- Zero-copy clones
- App-integrated backup/profiles

- Non-disruptive scale-to-fit
- Proactive wellness
- Non-disruptive upgrades
- Remote secure support
- Unified administration

Nimble Storage CS-Series arrays combine flash memory with low-cost, high-capacity drives, eliminating the need for expensive, high-RPM drives. By converging storage, backup, and disaster recovery into a single array, enterprises can significantly cut costs, reduce complexity, and implement a complete storage and disaster recovery solution.

Key benefits of Nimble Storage's CS-Series arrays include:

- Flash-Accelerated Primary Storage Performance

Intelligent flash memory management and application-optimised performance profiles significantly accelerating I/O and reduce latency.

- Instant Backups and Restores

High-density drives and 20x capacity optimisation enable cost-effective retention of up to 90 days of backups on a single array. There's no need to move data to or from tape or other backup media, so backups and restores can be performed in seconds.

- Application-Integrated Data Protection

Nimble Protection Manager (NPM) manages application-consistent backups for all application data residing on Nimble arrays, plus VM system-consistent backups and replicas for virtualised environments. With NPM, data can be instantly restored from any available backup, accelerating and simplifying application recovery.

- Fast Offsite Disaster Recovery

Nimble disaster recovery solution is enabled by highly WAN-efficient replication to an offsite Nimble array, making it up to 20x faster than typical SAN replication.

- Dramatically Simplified Management

An intuitive user interface eliminates the complexity of managing separate storage, backup, and disaster recovery devices.

- Unparalleled Scalability

Nimble Storage arrays scale in three ways: by adding shelves of drives to increase capacity, by adding controllers to increase performance, or by clustering together complete arrays in order to scale capacity & performance.

- 60%+ Lower Capex

By eliminating high-RPM drives and separate disk-based backup devices, Nimble Storage slashes infrastructure costs, energy consumption, and rack space requirements. Enterprises can save more than 60% off the cost of multiple-component solutions from existing storage vendors.

There are five key areas where Nimble Storage delivers substantial value relative to its competitors, even when legacy products are configured to include flash SSDs and HDDs:

1. Nimble Storage can accelerate customers' applications by delivering 4-5 times better performance and 2-5 times more useable capacity on a per dollar basis than similarly priced systems.

2. Nimble's CS-Series arrays provide superior data protection through a combination of snapshots and WAN-optimised replication, so customers can protect more of their data and restore data much faster.

3. Nimble Storage's CS-Series arrays can scale both capacity and performance much more flexibly and independently and at the lowest incremental cost - all without disrupting applications.

4. Nimble Storage's CS-Series arrays are dramatically simpler to deploy, manage and support on a day-to-day basis, as well as easier to integrate into a broader eco-system.

5. Nimble has a unique approach to remote support automation that enables it to predict not just faults, but also sub-optimal conditions and proactively ensure CS-Series arrays are running in top condition at all times.

Why nominee should win

1. Nimble Storage CS-Series arrays require a fraction of the hardware resources needed compared to traditional enterprise storage designs, thus saving costs, space and electricity needed.

2. Using efficient point-in-time snapshots, Nimble Storage's CS-Series arrays let customers easily and efficiently protect and restore data in minutes.

3. Using flash SSDs and leveraging a write-optimized data layout, Nimble delivers more IOPS than traditional storage at proven sub-millisecond latencies (measured across Nimble's installed base).

4. Based on its innovative approach, Nimble Storage has achieved 'Five Nines,' or greater than 99.999 percent annual uptime as observed across its installed base of systems.