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## Storage

### Indra Networks Offers Hardware-Based Data Compression

By Karen D. Schwartz

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In an effort to get the word out about its real-time data compression engine, tiny Indra Networks Inc. of San Jose, Calif., has begun actively promoting its StorCompress line of data compression



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The company has recently introduced StorCompress 200, a disk-to-disk storage product that uses the industry-standard "deflate" algorithm for compression, but does so in hardware as opposed to software.

StorCompress 200, aimed at the enterprise market, is delivered as a PCI card and supports Red Hat Linux 7.2 and 8.0 as well as Fedora core 1 and 2.

StorCompress 100 is similar, but is aimed at the small and medium-sized business market, with one engine instead of the two found in StorCompress 200, said Anupama Anantharaman, vice president of business development.

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Both StorCompress 200 and 100 use the "deflate" compression algorithm in hardware and include decompression hardware to retrieve the original data from the compressed data.

Both StorCompress products are aimed squarely at the explosion in disk-to-disk backup, with a

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Although the two companies possess all of the technology parts to unite storage and security management following their proposed merger, they'll still have to hammer out the specifics of integration.

compression ratio of 3:1, increasing the effective capacity of backup storage by a factor of three.

"So for the same cost you incur today, you are essentially getting three times the storage capacity," Anantharaman said.

And because the data being backed up is compressed, "you are actually backing up less data, significantly speeding up your backup time," she said.

There are two primary markets for this type of product, said Steve Duplessie, senior analyst at Enterprise Strategy Group of Milford, Mass.—the disk target backup market and the WAN market.

"This lets OEMs who want to play in the disk-based backup market build inexpensive, high-performance compression into their 'virtual tape' products, which is necessary in order to keep backup performance optimized," he said. "Otherwise, you'd have to run compression at the software layer and at the backup server."

The same holds true for WAN traffic, he said.

"If you can get good real-time compression, you don't need as fat, or expensive, a pipe to ship the data down. A 2:1 compression ratio cuts your line cost in half," he said.


Because Indra Networks offers a hardware-based solution—a real differentiator from its competitors, which offer software-based compression—some might consider it a better way to accomplish the goal, Duplessie said.

 [Read more here about how a Symantec-Veritas merger could bring together security and storage management.](#)

"Others have hardware compression built into their specific purpose-built solutions, but they aren't generic or general-purpose. It's a pretty good idea," he said.

StorCompress joins WebEnhance, Indra Networks' flagship product that uses HTML, JavaScript, cascaded style sheets and other text-based languages to compress Web pages so they can download faster and require less bandwidth.

Next up, Anantharaman said, is more innovation for StorCompress in the form of PCI-X support for the StorCompress card and different versions of the product to address price and performance targets of different customers.

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