

Akorri finds its BalancePoint between the virtual server and storage tiers

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Sector: Enterprise Software

Event summary

- Akorri has added a plug-in for VMware's vCenter virtual-infrastructure management console to its BalancePoint software for performance management. The company has signed a global reseller deal with Dell and has greatly expanded its partner program.
- The latest version of BalancePoint, 2.3, includes enhanced topology maps and support for Dell EqualLogic SANs, NetApp NFS and Brocade SAN switches. Support for Cisco equipment is on the roadmap.
- Vancouver Coastal Health is using BalancePoint to keep tabs on key metrics around its datacenter virtualization and consolidation initiative, while FFVA Mutual Insurance has harnessed the software for active management of its virtual infrastructure.

The 451 take

These contrasting customer use cases demonstrate the flexibility and usefulness of Akorri's BalancePoint. Best known as a performance monitor able to span the virtual server and storage tiers, it's still extremely helpful in pure environments on either side of that divide. But virtualization seems to be driving adoption. Virtual environments are complex and new, and they interact with legacy IT in unpredictable ways. The powerful analytics tools Akorri can bring to bear are useful for both monitoring and managing the virtual infrastructure layer.

Details

Akorri's BalancePoint handles agentless collection of management data from databases, servers, storage, **VMware** and storage virtualization, and analyzes that data in order to build models of infrastructure performance and utilization. With it, operators should be able to troubleshoot and pinpoint the root causes of problems in the near term, and plan for optimal capacity in the medium term. With the new plug-in, VMware administrators will be able to use BalancePoint directly from the vCenter console.

Akorri was founded in 2005 and has raised a total of \$42m in three rounds from **Matrix Partners**, **North Bridge Venture Partners**, **Globespan Capital Partners** and **BlueStream Ventures**. Its customer base has been growing rapidly. New accounts added this year include **Cambridge Trust**

Company, the County of Sacramento, California, **MassHousing**, **Midwest Family Mutual Insurance**, **Service Corporation International**, **Statistics Canada** and **VistaPrint**. Average deal size is \$40,000-50,000.

The management team's heritage reflects Akorri's combination of server and storage domain expertise. CTO and founder Rich Corley's previous venture **Pirus Networks** was sold to **Sun Microsystems** in 2002. He was replaced as CEO in November 2007 by Tom Joyce, the former VP and general manager of the storage business unit at **EMC**. The company has 60 employees, including a small development organization in Sri Lanka.

Competitive landscape

Akorri was traditionally lumped with **Onaro**, the only other performance-monitoring vendor able to diagnose bottlenecks between the server and storage tiers. In January, however, **NetApp** acquired Onaro and its SANscreen product; since then, SANscreen has been positioned more as a datacenter-automation play for the storage tier. On the physical server side, Akorri's performance-analytics messaging overlaps to some extent with that of analytical-overlay players such as **BMC ProactiveNet**, **Integrien** and **Netuitive**.

From Akorri's point of view, though, the useful comparison is with capacity-planning and performance-monitoring vendors for virtual environments, including **CiRBA**, **Novell PlateSpin**, **ToutVirtual** and **vKernel**. CiRBA's Placement Intelligence Technology is designed to identify good targets, not only for server consolidation, but also for ongoing optimization of virtual infrastructure. PlateSpin Recon, now a Novell product, tackles workload profiling, analysis and planning, to similar ends. ToutVirtual's VirtualIQ is set up to find over- and underused datacenter capacity, and vKernel's Capacity Analyzer aims to predict future problems and lower the cost per virtual machine (VM).

Akorri says its key differentiator is that those companies look at the VM layer in isolation, while it looks at infrastructure as a complete system, including both server and SAN.

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