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Bus-tech touts mainframe storage system

Appliance provides alternative to automated tape libraries for recovery, compliance.

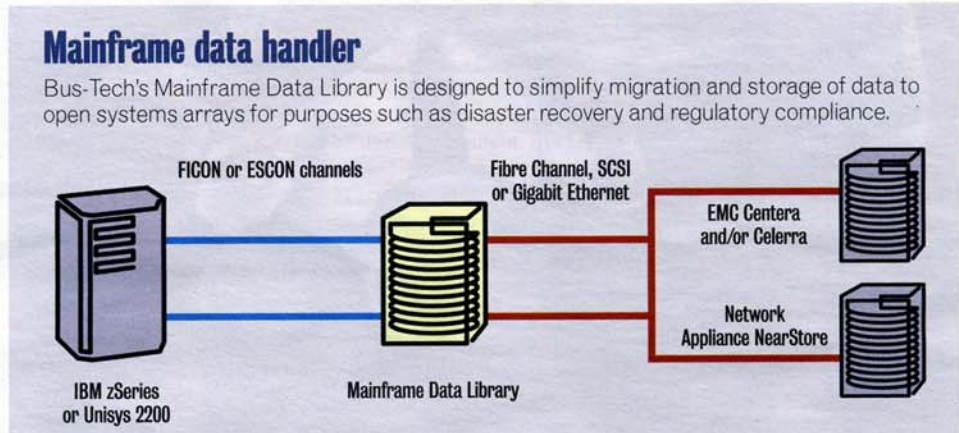
BY DENI CONNOR

Bus-Tech is rolling out a virtual tape appliance that replicates mainframe data to disk-based storage systems.

The Mainframe Data Library (MDL), which takes up less space than an automated tape library and can cut down on media expenditures, supports applications such as regulatory compliance and disaster recovery.

The appliance, which consists of as many as four bundled Bus-Tech Mainframe Appliance for Storage systems, connects to an IBM zSeries or Unisys 2200 mainframe via Enterprise Systems Connection (ESCON) or Fibre Connection (FICON) and to an open systems Network Appliance NearStore, EMC Centera or Celerra array via SCSI, Fibre Channel or Gigabit Ethernet. Bus-Tech also plans support for Hitachi's Hi-Command Content Archiving Platform and Sun's Compliance Archiving Software.

Because it has four to eight FICON ports or four to 12 ESCON ports, the MDL can boost the efficiency of data transfer and migration. Bus-Tech says its new offering supports more than 400Mbps throughput. It can emulate as many as 1,024 IBM tape



drives and is transparent to mainframe operations.

The library also features a tape eject function that provides for the writing of data from disk to tape over IP, enabling off-site storage for disaster recovery.

"The MDL provides an inexpensive disaster-recovery solution that allows data to be transmitted over the IP network either synchronously [for short distances] or asynchronously [for longer distances] without requiring additional equipment such as channel extenders," says Dianne McAdam, director of enterprise information assur-

ance for The Clipper Group research firm.

"The [product] allows customers to take advantage of snapshot features to test disaster-recovery capabilities without interfering with ongoing transmissions," she adds.

The appliance also features AES-256 software encryption of the virtual drive.

"Logical tapes can be encrypted, then written to physical tapes in encrypted format, which allows physical tapes to be transported without worrying about unencrypted tapes being lost," McAdam says.

The MDL competes with host-based virtual tape software from Diligent and CA and virtual tape libraries from Sun/StorageTek and IBM. Unlike the software-based systems, which require mainframe-class disk systems such as the IBM DS8000 or EMC's DMX, Bus-Tech's product uses less-expensive disk systems, such as the EMC Centera and Celerra. Starting at \$120,000, it is also less expensive than the Sun/StorageTek Virtual Storage Manager and IBM's Virtual Tape System, which start at more than twice that price. ■