The intelligence era - looking beyond storage

By Adam Day
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We are witnessing the dawn of the intelligence era, which is signifying a fundamental shift in the storage landscape.

Adam Day

While we have seen great strides in recent years with the move to flash disk storage – which has accounted for some massive performance gains – the reality is that the hardware gains are rapidly diminishing, so we are having to look beyond just flash to resolve storage issues.

I believe it's fair to say that the flash era has essentially become a de facto standard – everybody has it and it isn't considered as a criterion that sets storage technology apart anymore.

With the dawn of the intelligence era, we begin to see the ushering in of Artificial Intelligence (AI), machine learning and automation, which are becoming the key points that everyone needs to take into consideration to automate and streamline their technology environments.

This shift is coming about for a number of reasons. A key driver in South Africa, specifically, is the lack of skills available. For every enterprise to have storage experts as part of their organisation is not realistic, both from a cost and availability of skills perspective, so we are moving to an era where we will need automation and intelligence as a standard feature of our systems.

This will obviously also have a profound impact on storage solutions and the type of offerings that we can expect to see in the future.

A look at storage solutions

Customers are looking to invest in storage systems that effectively future-proof them, so a key aspect of decision-making will be around investing in a platform that will be able to take advantage of new technologies and not have to be replaced.

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However, not only are enterprises increasingly looking to invest in systems that will support next-generation technologies, they are also looking for a vendor that will allow them to make an investment and then support the refreshes of their technology in a few years, at no additional investment, whether this is via pay per use models or technology refresh options available at time of purchase.

Automation is something that's also going to be looked for as a standard both across the global ecosystems and not just inside storage systems. Customers will be looking to invest their funds in systems that are leveraging AI and have the ability to make decisions and automate their processes and make recommendations that are specific to their own application and business needs.

Driving business agility

Most importantly though, enterprises will want to invest in storage systems that will help them with their entire ecosystems and drive business agility across their entire stack.

As bearing in mind 90% of data centre issues and outages happen outside of the storage system, a system that offers intelligence that looks beyond the storage is key, and solutions that can view cross-stack into the VM layer, network layer or compute layer to see what is happening globally will lead the way.

So, we are talking about providing solutions that offer cross-stack analytics, as opposed to just providing AI for storage platforms – the ability to look beyond the storage if a game-changer.

In this next-generation world, where we are producing data at such massive pace and scale that it is beyond human capability to manage and classify, it needs to be handled by something that's automated and I think AI is the only solution for this.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Adam Day, CEEMA Storage Category Manager at HPE South Africa