

## With ILIO now in release 2.0, Atlantis woos talent from Citrix and VMware

**Analyst: Rachel Chalmers**

**Atlantis Computing's** Inline Image Optimization (ILIO) software has hit the big 2.0. Designed to drop in beside **Citrix Systems** or **VMware** virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) deployments to cut the cost of storage and boost user experience, ILIO – once available only in hardware – is now a software virtual appliance as well. According to the company's own calculations, ILIO can cut capital expenditure related to VDI by as much as 75%. The story is strong enough that Joel Davis, VMware veteran, and David Cumberworth, formerly of Citrix, have become VPs of sales for Atlantis for North America and Northern Europe, respectively.

### The 451 take

VDI is famously a storage hog. Virtual PC images imagine that they are talking to local hard disks, when in fact their I/O is redirected out of the server tier and into VMDKs (virtual machine disks) and VHDs hosted on the SAN. This fact alone means storage capacity can account for 80% of total expenditure on VDI. What ILIO does is intercept traffic locally at the Windows NTFS protocol level. Most of the virtual PCs' I/O requests can be met out of the ILIO cache, and the software presents the server tier with the rest in the form of the serialized I/O the SAN prefers. Throw in image management – ILIO de-duplicates VDI images before they reach storage – and the savings should be dramatic.

In August 2010, Atlantis Computing closed a \$10m series C investment co-led by **EI Dorado Ventures**, Partech International and **Cisco Systems**, bringing total funding to date to \$15m. That deal also saw the appointment of a new CEO, Bernard Harguindeguy, formerly of **GreenBorder Technologies**. For a long time, Atlantis relied upon a single reference account, JPMorgan Chase & Co. The addition of two more is making the venture look significantly less adventurous.

Los Angeles-based real estate firm **CB Richard Ellis** deployed Atlantis ILIO alongside VMware View 4.5. Its goals were to save millions on the cost of maintaining its desktop fleet, to speed the provisioning of new workspaces and to make it easier to support a workforce distributed across Europe, the Middle East and Asia. Rather than adding dedicated storage hardware to support its VDI deployment, CB Richard Ellis reports that it used VMware tiered storage with ILIO virtual appliances to offload IOPS and process I/O locally within the server and rack.

**GlassHouse Technologies** provides consulting services to help its customers build datacenter infrastructure, so it ought to know whereof it speaks. As its customers

experimented with VDI in traditional proofs of concept, they were all building and tearing down labs in much the same ways. GlassHouse decided to offer cloud-based virtual labs, where customers could test different combinations of hypervisors, connection brokers, application virtualization and profile management to find which best met their needs. In doing so, it reduced the storage footprint for this service from 164GB to 17GB.

## Competition

The storage vendors love the prospect of VDI deployments blowing up the SAN, but customers are less enthused. Recent innovation around storage optimization for virtual desktops has been intense. **Actifio** is aiming at the general case that Atlantis' VDI software is a specific instance of. Citrix just announced its own version of the technique under the name XenDesktop with IntelliCache. **Unidesk** first came to market with messaging uncannily similar to that of Atlantis, but these days it tends to emphasize virtual desktop management. Unidesk has won 60 paying customers, and its references include Kawasaki Motors, Renascent Bank, Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities and Wisconsin Department of Children and Families.

More generally, companies are seeking to simplify how VDI interacts with storage by splitting workspaces into distinct layers. **Viewfinity** does this in order to manage privileges. Client virtualization vendors such as **MokaFive** and **Virtual Computer** do it to centrally provision workspaces that will run on bare metal hypervisors on the endpoint device. **DeskStream** and **Wanova** do it as part of a wholesale reimagining of desktop management, including provisioning to physical as well as virtual PCs.

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