

STORAGE

Vol. 9 No. 10 February 2011



Disks and Disk Subsystems

gold: Nimbus Data Systems S-Class Sustainable Storage System

The Nimbus S-Class Sustainable Storage System is jam-packed with performance and management enhancements for an eye-popping price. About the only thing it's missing is spinning disk.

Nimbus' goal with the S-Class system is to bring the cost of a flash-based storage system in line with a traditional 15,000 rpm primary disk array. To sweeten the deal, the all-flash unified NAS and SAN system includes snapshots, asynchronous replication, inline data deduplication and thin provisioning built into its HALO operating system.

The 2U system scales from 2.5 TB to 250 TB of solid-state storage with 24 to 600 redundant flash blades. It supports iSCSI, Fibre Channel, Infiniband, NFS, CIFS, and Fibre Channel over Ethernet (FCoE) connectivity protocols. From a performance perspective, Nimbus claims the S-Class system can deliver 1.65 million IOPS and 72 Gbps throughput.

And you get all that for a price starting at \$24,995 for 2.5 TB of enterprise flash.

Nimbus keeps the price down by designing its own NAND flash module, and it uses enterprise multi-level cell (eMLC) flash chips with 28% overprovisioning. The flash blades in the appliance support 6 Gbps SAS connectivity.

The system is intended for organizations that are heavily virtualized and run compute-intensive applications or transactional databases. It's powered by two multi-core Intel processors and dual TCP/IP offload engines.

The Nimbus system scored especially high marks from our judges for its performance, ease of integration and value.

"It's still early days for this system, but it delivers tremendous bang for the buck," one judge said.

"This is the first fully functional, totally unified flash SSD [solid-state drive] storage system at the price of spinning disks," another judge said. "This solves a lot of urgent and important problems."

Besides disk, another thing the Nimbus system lacks is name recognition. Although Nimbus has been around since 2006, it isn't even among the best-known private storage system vendors.

"Hopefully, this will change when more users find out about [this system]," another judge added.

