The Secure Data Solution®—Frequently Asked Questions

1.   What disk can you put behind this?

We generally equip our units with storage options matching the space and performance required by a customer's operations. In many cases we might also approve connection to customer-supplied storage.

2.   How much disk can you put behind this?

As much as you like. Our storage is scalable so you can add more space as needs change.

3.   What tape media do you emulate?

In terms of hardware we emulate 3490 (for mainframes) and LTO (for open systems). For media you can specify whatever limits you prefer, from tiny cartridges to LTO-4 sized media.

4.   Does this solution interface with all major Tape Management Systems vendors? How does it communicate?

Yes, such as CA-1, RMM, Zara, Dynam/T using a started task and interfaces exposed by the various TMS utilities.

5.   Is your replication true tape replication at the tape volume level or is it disk replication?

It is replication of the tape files on disk.

6.   Can you selectively decide what gets replicated and what does not?

Yes, we have rules whereby you can qualify what should be copied. For example, certain volser ranges or certain DSN matching.

7.   How does your expiration processing work?

Shops generally run a daily housekeeping job to extract host catalog changes, which the started task relays to our equipment, including scratch or cataloged status changes.

8.   What's the capacity of the device in terms of tape drives and volumes?

This is entirely scalable. A single box may have one or two FICON adapters each capable of emulating 256 drives which may be subdivided between LPARs or physical hosts using a director. The number of volsers is not really limited and is more a function of how much storage exists divided by the average quantity of data written to each tape.

9.   What are the performance and throughput spec's?

Depending on the host's channel, how many drives are active and the nature of the host's data (e.g., how well it compresses) this will vary somewhat. In fact, we actually perform better when multiple simultaneous emulations are active as it helps keep the channel utilized.

10.   How many host interface channels can you configure, and of what variety can they be?

SCSI-FCP, ESCON, or FICON. We support up to two matching adapter types per box. You may, however, mix and match different boxes as you require.

11.   How does your replication work? What happens to lost packets or what happens if the network links fail?

The mover component serially writes data from the start to end of a virtual tape and a network disruption will terminate a transfer. When the network is restored the transfer will continue where it left off.

12.   Can you offload the data to real physical tape? How does that work and is it transparent to the host?

Yes, we have an IDG 9487 unit that can connect to tape drives allowing you various functions entirely independent of a host mainframe. You can (a) import existing media; (b) export a virtual tape to real tape in a manner allowing it to be shipped to another data center and read in without our equipment; (c) archive virtual tapes in an encrypted, compressed, stacked and spanned fashion where we fully utilize physical tape space; or (d) restore a virtual tape image from tape, selecting from any generation of it you require.

13.   Can this be shared by more than one LPAR running separate tape management systems?

Yes, that is quite common.

14.   Are there any single points of failure? What does the hardware architecture look like in terms of redundancy?

It depends on how robust a system you require. If you are a small company without rigid service level agreements you might feel comfortable with a single channel unit. Most, however, will buy secondary channel units and we commonly install multiple catalog units. Everything has dual power supplies and the like. In terms of storage there are numerous configurations where information can be stored in multiple locations