

# Beat the bulge

However much you expand storage capacity, your users will always fill it, so here are 10 ways to boost storage efficiency

BY LEE TAYLOR

## 1 Remove media files

Use a robust reporting tool to identify all unwanted media files. Action based on the results of this report could take the form of sending a company-wide or owner-specific memo, moving the files off frontline storage or simply deleting them. Automation tools are available that can execute these actions. Expect to reclaim 20–40 per cent of used capacity.

## 2 Block file saves

Impose enterprise-wide rules that prevent certain file types from being saved. Highlight for your users that they cannot save audio/video collections on corporate storage devices. Ensure your storage devices remain free from unwanted data at all times.

## 3 Impose storage quotas

Establish the average usage by user and set a soft quota slightly above this average. This quota should be used to deliver clear notifications to your users – communicate what reasonable storage use is. Expect to reduce overall storage use by between 30 and 50 per cent, depending on the quota size used.

## 4 Involve users

Deliver interactive reports to your end users – only they know the true value of the data they store. Clear reports and straightforward tools allow users to play a vital role in maintaining an efficient storage resource. User involvement makes sensible storage use part of the business culture. Expect to reduce the administrative overhead associated with SRM by between 50 and 80 per cent.

## 5 Control renamed files

Some users will attempt to disguise their media files by renaming them, or even saving them within other files. Identify malicious users through reports that return binary file types and discover hidden streams. Prevent storage from being silently absorbed by hidden copyrighted materials.

## 6 Control duplicate files

Establish if a duplication problem exists. The results of an enterprise-wide duplicate file report will allow you to identify problem areas and raise awareness within the relevant user groups. Anticipate up to 30 per cent duplication rates.

## 7 Control stagnant files

Identify files that have not been accessed within the past two years and remove them. Data retention policies require that this data be maintained but it does not have to reside on frontline storage. Expect to reduce storage use by up to 20 per cent.

## 8 Control files of obsolete users

Identify content owned by users who have left the organisation. Confirm the stagnation of these files by checking accessed dates and backup/move or backup/delete. Expect to reclaim between 5 and 10 per cent of storage capacity depending on staff turnover.

## 9 Raise cost awareness

Highlight storage costs for department managers. Show the costs accumulated by their personnel and encourage action – communicate with users through quota notifications, interactive reports and via their managers. Communicating storage cost through department managers boosts the response rate of all user-focused actions.

## 10 Charge for storage use

Implementing a system of internal billing leads directly to department level efficiency. There is some degree of overhead in such a policy but if departments are already purchasing resources internally, adding storage to that system is straightforward. Internal billing cuts usage growth rates by 40 per cent plus. <

Lee Taylor is enterprise storage product manager at Northern. Northern and UK partner Pillar Solutions will be at Storage Expo 2007. See p6 for details