

## VMware Takes a Strategic Step Forward in Virtualization

Thomas J. Bittman

VMware's recently announced Control Center offers distributed server virtualization. This strategic technology propels VMware into a leadership position in real-time infrastructure.

## NEWS ANALYSIS

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### Event

On 30 June 2003, VMware announced the VMware Control Center, which centrally manages virtual machines on various servers and performs runtime migration of a virtual machine image from one server to another. VMware Control Center will become available by year-end 2003.

### Analysis

VMware has positioned itself to provide a unique and strategic virtualization solution. The company has succeeded in the Intel server market with software partition managers ESX Server and GSX Server. VMware's only competition has come from Microsoft, which does not support VMware's products (customers must obtain product support through original equipment manufacturers) and which recently acquired the assets of Connectix. Although Microsoft's Virtual Server product will not be available until the end of 2003, Gartner advised clients to consider VMware as a tactical solution by targeting a return on investment within two years. However, VMware is becoming a more strategic partner.

Gartner said in 2001 that VMware could take a compelling strategic direction by extending beyond a single server. VMware Control Center does this and offers a compelling solution for managing distributed servers efficiently. Gartner defines server virtualization as "the pooling of various server resources to mask the physical nature and boundaries of those resources from resource users and administrators." Automatically moving workloads between servers can significantly reduce the need for administrators to overprovision and manually install servers.

Vendors are developing many different types of virtualization technology, but VMware has a lead in the Intel architecture market based on a combination of unique capabilities, effectiveness with most applications and dynamic ability. Microsoft's virtualization strategy remains the biggest threat, and software vendor pricing and licensing schemes are not yet designed for dynamic, virtual server environments.

**Recommendations:** Evaluate Control Center for workloads that are not horizontally scalable, vary in performance but peak under two processors, and can absorb a short switchover time (VMware claims 1.5 seconds). Good candidates include small, monolithic applications and development environments. Evaluate the switchover impact to your applications and be cautious about early adoption.

**Analytical Source:** Thomas Bittman, Gartner Research

### Recommended Reading and Related Research

- "Microsoft Acquisition Makes Connectix Virtual Server a Strategic Choice" — Although Connectix trails VMware in market share and virtual server technology, getting the full support of Microsoft will make a huge difference. **By Thomas Bittman, John Enck and John Phelps**
- "VMware ESX: The Key to Intel-Based Server Consolidation?" — Many enterprises have several single-processor workloads running on separate Intel servers. Unless you can consolidate those workloads on a single operating-system image, analyze the cost savings of consolidating them to fewer servers using VMware's ESX. **By Thomas Bittman and John Enck**

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