

On the Radar: Storage Made Easy providing a solution to silo'd and fragmented corporate data

Introducing the concept of the file fabric



Summary

Catalyst

The cloud has introduced a great deal of agility and flexibility to how organizations can conduct business. The cloud's rise in part is due to how it effectively democratizes IT in the enterprise, allowing line of business to bypass normal IT controls and process. However, one of the hidden challenges with the increased un-coordinated cloud use is it creates silo'd and fragment data assets. Storage made easy (SME) has developed a file fabric solution designed to secure corporate data and make this data discoverable within the enterprise.

Key messages

- SME enables organizations to search the contents of all corporate files using the SME Apache Solr integration.
- SME allows all file events to be audited and features IP logging and GEO location recording for file location on upload and storage destination.
- SME provides a unique Cloud Control fabric that enterprise can wrap around all of their data, on premise, within a public cloud, or on a third-party software vendor's cloud.
- SME provides a way to securely share files via email with expiry or password protected URL.

Ovum view

The challenge of managing the corporate data in a cloudy world is stretching enterprise governance and security procedures. This data is typically stored in silo's and un-sanctioned data sharing tools are used to move this data between corporate and personal devices. The challenge for organizations is not to impose draconian rules that would destroy the agility and flexibility of using cloud computing, rather to secure and make discoverable all this data so it does not represent a threat to the organization. To achieve this balancing act requires a capability to identify all the corporate data, apply policies to that data, and enable its movement to be as frictionless as possible.

Recommendations for enterprises

Why put SME on your radar?

The challenge for many in IT operations is how to deliver the required level of availability, reliability, and security of corporate data that is spread over many different environments. SME has developed a file fabric solution that enables it to put a wrapper around all corporate data and expose this data in a secure and frictionless way so users can access this data from any device. With General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (Regulation (EU) 2016/679) due to come in to force in 2018 SME provides the tools for organizations to understand its level of exposure to this new regulation.

Highlights

SME has over 50 different connectors that enable it to access data stored in a wide range of different repository types from on-premises to cloud environments. This access is provided through a single-sign-on that is integrated with the corporate LDAP (or other Identity Management Systems), and enables policies to be applied across all the data, but more importantly unifies all the data so it is discoverable. SME is a software appliance and as such is fast and easy to install in any environment.

Background

SME's headquarters are in the London Borough of Sutton where founders, CEO, Jim Liddle, and Chairman Ian Osborne, are based. Osborne and Liddle founded SME in 2009 and spent three years developing and building the initial product prior to releasing it to the market in mid-2013. Today, the company provides applications, support, training, and professional services, enabling customers and partners to build comprehensive data focused solutions. SME's CEO is Jim Liddle, who has extensive experience in Sales, Big Data, Middleware and Cloud technologies and has a track record of successfully growing sales for high growth technology companies over the last 15 years.

Current position

SME uses a multi-layered approach to deliver its data services for enterprise customers this starts with the cloud control fabric, then has a cloud file manager on top of the fabric, and finally has the user access layer.

Cloud control fabric

The cloud control fabric is a concept layer that consists of a number of key technologies. The idea behind the control fabric is that it enables organizations to effectively wrap a control layer around all data irrespective of where it is – on-premises or public cloud. SME integrates with active directory and LDAP so that single-sign-on can be used to access data irrespective of where it is. The data can be encrypted irrespective of the underlying infrastructure, this means that even if the cloud provider does not provide data encryption with SME the data can still be protected. Using tagging SME is able to restrict access to data based on location, device, IP address, or user. This enables sensitive data to be set as available on the corporate LAN in the HQ only for example. Included in the control fabric is a file sync and share capability so that data can be used collaboratively in a secure way, respecting the access restrictions. Finally, SME uses the concept of file event auditing to ensure compliance to regulatory requirements are reported on.

Cloud file manager

The cloud file manager layer provides a holistic view of all the data irrespective of where it is stored. The benefit the cloud file manager layer provides is it adds consistency to the data so that users can work with all the data in the same way. For example, this use of a file manager allows the data to be locked at the higher layer so that only one person can edit a document at a time. Other key benefits include the ability to auto version data, and use of a recycling folder to recover deleted items. However, the biggest benefit the cloud file manager provides is the ability to search the entire corporate data from a single window using the Apache Solr integration.

User access layer

SME has native clients for all the major operating systems including; Mac, Windows, Linux, iOS, Android, BlackBerry and Windows Phone. In addition, SME adds a drive directly to a user's desktop for Mac, Windows, and Linux so that files can be easily accessed. For those using email to share files, SME has Microsoft Outlook and Mac Mail integration/plugins.

Data sheet

Key facts

Table 1: Data sheet: SME

Product name	File Fabric	Product classification	Enterprise File Sync and Share
Version number	17.05	Release date	2013
Industries covered	All	Geographies covered	All
Relevant company sizes	All	Licensing options	Subscription based
URL	http://storagemadeeasy.com	Routes to market	Mixed
HQ	Sutton, Surrey, UK	Number of employees	32

Source: Ovum

Appendix

On the Radar

On the Radar is a series of research notes about vendors bringing innovative ideas, products, or business models to their markets. Although On the Radar vendors may not be ready for prime time, they bear watching for their potential impact on markets and could be suitable for certain enterprise and public sector IT organizations.

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