

**Brocade Launches Fabric Vision, Enhances Gen5 Portfolio — Tells the World Fibre Channel Is Still Hot**

March 26, 2013 - IDC Link

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Fibre Channel remains a popular storage networking medium with strong YoY growth. However, because of the media frenzy over IP-based connectivity, most announcements related to Fibre Channel receive a tepid response. However, businesses continue to invest in Fibre Channel to power their most mission- and business-critical environments. [The announcement on March 25 by Brocade](#) proves that it is still fully committed to the Fibre Channel market and to businesses that still have faith in it. Brocades announcement is noteworthy for the following reasons:

- Purely from a speeds and feeds perspective, Brocade has introduced the next generation of its Gen5 portfolio. It announced the industry's highest-density fixed-configuration SAN switch. The new Brocade 6520 Switch provides 16Gbps FCP at line speeds. This switch puts Brocade in front of the Gen5 pack with a comprehensive portfolio of Gen 5 Fibre Channel modular fixed port and embedded solutions and, with more than a year of broad customer deployment of products based on the 16Gbps Fibre Channel standard, it further distances Brocade ahead of competitors.
- Brocade has finally made the move to natively provide the comprehensive reporting, monitoring, and auditing features that customers, which had resorted to using solutions from third-party providers to fulfill this need, have longed for. Brocade's Fabric Vision technology changes that it is a hardware and software solution that combines capabilities from Brocade hardware, the embedded Fabric operating system, and the Brocade Network Advisor management software. Leveraging diagnostics, monitoring, and management capabilities, Brocade Fabric Vision technology provides administrators with the ability to anticipate and preempt problems before the actually become problems.
- Brocade is an active member of standards initiatives and by way of this announcement it enforced its commitment to the International Committee for Information Technology Standards (INCITS) T11 Technical Committee, which is working on finalizing the standards for Gen 6 Fibre Channel (32Gbps) by the end of 2013.
- Brocade has acknowledged the growing importance of OpenStack in the cloud and its imminent role in the enterprise. It submitted that it is working with the OpenStack Foundation to develop open source software that will simplify management of Fibre Channel fabrics in cloud architectures. It plans to announce the Fibre Channel SAN Zone Manager blueprint at the OpenStack Summit in April. Additionally, it said that the Fibre Channel Volume Manager blueprint proposal will be included in the new OpenStack Grizzly release, which is also scheduled for release next month.

With this announcement, Brocade has broken the mold of announcements that simply declare supremacy over speeds and feeds. It is extending its reach into adjunct markets that were being fulfilled by third-party vendors like Virtual Instruments and also signaling a strong commitment to bridging the divide between commercial and open source initiatives, especially for Fibre Channel.

This announcement from Brocade is sure to receive a warm reception from its existing partners and customers. Businesses that are committed to Fibre Channel but have chosen to deploy other vendor solutions may reexamine Brocade as they build their next-generation datacenter infrastructure.

But Brocade still has to continue its journey to establish a bigger presence in the converged infrastructure market. It also needs to be more vocal about its Ethernet, IP, and cloud aspirations. This announcement is a good start and puts Brocade on a solid path in 2013 and beyond.

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