



Snapshot

March 19, 2004

IBM eServer iSeries: Integrating the Past, Present, and Future

By Clay Ryder

Enterprises of all sizes are seeking ways to simplify and buttress their IT footprints, most notably small to mid-tier businesses. In many cases, small to mid-tier enterprises are looking for solutions that allow them to “repair” and/or complement the IT choices made in the past and are seeking to do so by consolidating existing IT footprints with an eye to future expansion. IBM eServer iSeries offers battle-tested solutions for organizations looking to tame complexity and maximize ROI. The iSeries is an ideal platform for server consolidation and integration with x86 architecture systems, while providing a state of the art execution environment that supports Linux-based applications and many of the value added capabilities associated with main frames.

Dealing with IT Complexity

The pressure to create efficiencies within IT is felt no more keenly than in the mid-tier market segment. The demand for these efficiencies comes from both within and outside the enterprise, by both budgets and markets. In the present economic environment, which continues to suffer slack markets and penny-pinching customers, all potential cost savings within the enterprise are considered worth pursuing. Many CFOs look to their IT departments to cut costs, particularly in light of their lavish expenditures of a few years past. IT managers are in turn trying to reduce cost through consolidation and simplification of their IT footprints.

Meanwhile, market forces and the evolving value chain between the enterprise and its customers, partners, and suppliers require that IT deployment be flexible, robust, and consistent with value chain partners. The IT footprint not only must stay within certain parameters of currency to play within the enterprise’s existing value chain, it must also be deployed in a way that allows future expansion.

What’s an IT Manager to Do?

The IBM eServer iSeries offers organizations the opportunity to consolidate, simplify, and lay the groundwork for future expansions while leveraging existing assets, including Intel-based products and existing Windows servers.

eServer iSeries Supports Multiple Operating Systems on a Single System

The eServer iSeries’ ability to be dynamically partitioned to support multiple instantiations of OS environments offers IT managers the ability to run Linux, OS/400, and AIX 5L, as well as Windows (through virtual I/O provided by the POWER Hypervisor technology) all within the context, manageability, and simplicity of a single server. Since most mid-tier enterprises operate heterogeneous environments, this multi-OS capability proffers substantial opportunities for both cost savings and simplification of network management. This value proposition has clearly resonated with the marketplace as IBM has seen its year-over-year sales of Intel-based eServer xSeries integrated solutions double while the eServer iSeries offerings have found more than 2,500 new customers.

Leveraging Intel-based Server Investments with the eServer iSeries

eServer iSeries and its x86-based server integration features provide enterprises with substantial Wintel investments the unique ability to leverage and complement this existing investment while obtaining decreased

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complexity through workload and server consolidation. The integrated eServer xSeries server can be deployed within the eServer iSeries case itself, or an external eServer xSeries solution can be interconnected with the eServer iSeries by means of HSL, providing shared access to tape, DVDs, CD-ROMs, and dynamic virtual disks. By deploying the eServer iSeries as the “heart” of an IT deployment, organizations have the option for scaling up through the eServer iSeries or more incrementally scaling out using the eServer xSeries.

Software Support, ISVs, and Linux on eServer iSeries

The ultimate value of any platform is determined by the availability of industry leading software. IBM's current support of over thirty middleware offerings including DB2, WebSphere, and Tivoli for Linux on the eServer iSeries (in addition to the many existing OS/400 applications) is a clear testimony of IBM's software investment in the platform. However, what are most impressive are the more than 175 ISV solutions for Linux on eServer iSeries that are presently available, with an additional 300+ presently under development. For the enterprise that has merely dabbled in Linux or has held off altogether, the market has clearly spoken. Not only is Linux a rapidly maturing operating environment, its momentum — measured by ISV adoption rates — is accelerating.

POWER under the Hood: The Emerging Industry Standard

The POWER chip is increasingly being cited as a means by which ISVs can leverage their existing 32-bit application base while supporting the transition to the 64-bit computing environment with a minimum of fuss. Since ISVs need only re-compile their applications to make them compliant with the 64-bit POWER environment, this is a powerful argument in favor of the 64-bit POWER architecture, and a sharp contrast to the complete porting necessary to migrate from Intel's 32-bit x86 platform to its 64-bit Itanium platform. For small to mid-tier enterprises running 32-bit applications on POWER, the POWER-based eServer iSeries offers an opportunity for not only upgrading application performance but increasing consolidation through increased MIPS concentrations.

Linux on the eServer iSeries offers dramatic opportunities for technological synergy, and IBM continues to expand its commitment to Linux and Open Source application development by ISVs. As more ISVs choose the Linux on POWER combination, it becomes clear that the ISV community is embracing 64-bit POWER as a standard platform. IBM's public commitment to support new Linux distributions makes it a safe bet for small to mid-tier organizations that wish to embrace the cost savings of Linux on the uniquely capable eServer iSeries platform.

What Does It All Mean?

The eServer iSeries offers a host of opportunities for small to mid-tier enterprises. Companies that are seeking to consolidate existing IT footprints may find the eServer iSeries' support for multiple OS partitions and resource allocations an intriguing solution with demonstrable benefit. This multi-OS and multi-workload environment offers substantial cost savings not only through a reduction in servers deployed, but through state of the art Linux solutions that can leverage the seamless support for 32-bit and 64-bit applications the POWER offers.

The support from ISVs for Linux on POWER is providing 175+ industry leading applications that are available today with another 300+ in the pipeline. This bodes well for the small and mid-tier enterprise. In addition, Linux support offers the opportunity to replace legacy offerings, while allowing enterprises to capture substantial cost savings and consolidation gains by blending Linux offerings with OS/400 or Windows deployments.

Whether it is infrastructure simplification or the ability to expand and meet new value chain demands, small and mid-tier enterprises will likely find the eServer iSeries an ideal way to meet both requirements. The IBM eServer iSeries offers solutions for today's IT issues — such as consolidation and simplification — while also providing a stable and extensible foundation for meeting tomorrow's needs. Small and mid-tier enterprises seeking a competitive edge in their operations are well advised to consider the value proposition offered by the IBM eServer iSeries.