**Cirtas reveals its cloud storage focus and Bluejet technology**
**Analyst:** [Simon Robinson](http://the451group.com/about/bio_detail.php?eid=163) **Date:** 24 Nov 2009 **Email This Report:** [to colleagues »»](http://the451group.com/report_view/email_report.php?service=mis&entity_id=60599&entity_headline=Q2lydGFzIHJldmVhbHMgaXRzIGNsb3VkIHN0b3JhZ2UgZm9jdXMgYW5kIEJsdWVqZXQgdGVjaG5vbG9neQ==)/ [to yourself »»](http://the451group.com/report_view/email_report.php?service=mis&entity_id=60599&entity_headline=Q2lydGFzIHJldmVhbHMgaXRzIGNsb3VkIHN0b3JhZ2UgZm9jdXMgYW5kIEJsdWVqZXQgdGVjaG5vbG9neQ==&self=yes&todo=email)

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**Event summary**

Cirtas Systems is the latest startup to emerge with a focus on the cloud storage market. It recently made a 'soft' launch from stealth mode, though it's not planning to release its first products or talk in detail about its plans until 2010.

* The company's positioning statement is to make cloud storage work like on-site storage arrays, in essence combining the benefits of cloud (cost, scale) with those of traditional IT (security, performance, application compatibility).
* Cirtas plans to release its Bluejet Cloud Storage Controller next year, promising to reduce the total cost of ownership for storage and helping to simplify datacenter operations.

**The 451 take**
Although Cirtas has yet to publicly disclose its plans in any detail, the vendor appears to be addressing a set of challenges – especially around security, performance and integration – that must be tackled if storage as a service is to make the transition from being a relatively niche tier for 'long tail' disaster recovery/archiving into something more interesting. Cirtas' claim to make cloud storage work like on-site storage is nothing if not bold, but the experience of its cofounders suggests that its team is well aware of the challenges of – and potential workarounds for – WAN latency. Cirtas will no doubt attract plenty of attention from potential friends and foes as it builds up to a full launch, which is expected sometime in 2010.
**Details**
**Cirtas Systems** recently emerged from deep-stealth mode, though it's still being coy about its specific product plans. The company was founded by CEO Dan Decasper and chief architect Allen Samuels, both networking experts. The pair previously worked together (Decasper as CTO, Samuels as chief architect) at WAN optimization specialist **Orbital Data**, which was acquired by **Citrix** in 2006. Decasper arrived at Orbital after that firm acquired **Jibe Networks**, which he cofounded. Cirtas' VP of marketing is Josh Goldstein, who recently held the same position at **DataDirect Networks** (DDN). The vendor has raised funds from **New Enterprise Associates** and **Lightspeed Venture Partners**; both invested in **Data Domain** as well as **Riverbed Technology**, Cirtas notes.
Cirtas says its core Bluejet Cloud Storage Controller technology (a 'blue jet' is a type of upper-atmosphere lightning) has been designed to overcome the challenges associated with cloud storage – the data is secure, existing applications can be used without modification, and data is protected as though it was on a local storage array, with commensurate levels of performance. Coupled with this is consumption-based pricing: servers are provisioned with the required amount of capacity, but that capacity is not billed for until data is actually written. Additional capacity is available on demand, and users don't have to fill their datacenters with traditional storage systems, which of course consume floor space and power.
Bluejet will be available as an on-site appliance that integrates with local servers and storage arrays, as well as with third-party cloud storage service providers over Internet/cloud APIs. Cirtas says it will also allow customers to minimize their expenditures on cloud storage services through techniques that reduce storage, access and transaction fees. It's currently on the lookout for prospective partners.
**Competitive landscape**
The cloud storage landscape has seen a glut of activity recently as a variety of startup, specialist and large vendors have pounced on the opportunity to deliver storage as a service. The market is broadly composed of two types of companies: cloud storage technology enablers and cloud storage service providers. Those concentrating on the former area have largely focused on selling 'scale-out' storage platforms, allowing providers to build large-scale storage services from commodity components. Players here include **Bycast**, **B-Virtual**, **Cleversafe**, DDN (Web Object Scaler), **EMC** (**Atmos**) **MaxiScale** and **ParaScale**. Storage service providers include **Amazon** (Web Services) and startups **Nirvanix** and **Zetta**; all three have developed their core storage platforms internally.
In addition, integration specialists are developing technologies that help end users connect their in-house applications with back-end cloud storage; Cirtas probably fits into this category. Other players targeting this space include **Mezeo Software** (focusing very much on service providers), while another stealthy startup, **TwinStrata**, is looking to connect on-premises applications to cloud storage using iSCSI. Nirvanix (CloudNAS), **Iron Mountain** (Virtual File Store), Bycast and others also offer legacy application integration capabilities.
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