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Improving Your Novell Filr Deployment with Novell File Management Products

by Buck Gashler

The momentum from April's release of Novell Filr shows no sign of slowing down. So far, we've seen more than 4,000 product downloads, a record number of Open Enterprise Server license renewals (entitling customers to Filr for free), and one of the highest customer satisfaction ratings of any Novell product. Filr is empowering more and more organisations to extend the value of their Novell—and even Microsoft—networks by adding remote access and sharing capabilities to their on-premises data.

As organisations are planning and deploying Filr, the astute ones have turned to Novell file system products to both simplify and secure their deployments. After all, it was Novell that developed Filr and extended the Novell file system's access and sharing capabilities. So who knows more about optimising the Novell file system for Filr than Novell?

Novell File Management Products

Novell offers a comprehensive set of file management products designed to help organisations manage data growth in an age when data stored on networks is growing exponentially.

- **Novell File Reporter** inventories network file systems and delivers the detailed file storage intelligence needed to optimise and secure networks for efficiency and compliance.
- **Novell Storage Manager** automates the full lifecycle management of user and group storage based on events, identities and policies.
- **Novell Dynamic File Services and Dynamic Storage Technology** tier data between network volumes and shares based on compliance needs while giving users access to all their files in one place.

These products are available for purchase individually or in a product suite known as the Novell File Management Suite.

Securing Your Filr Deployment with Novell File Reporter

Filr has an extensive range of built-in security features, including secure communication through HTTPS, support for LDAPS, certificates for SSL encryption with 2048-bit keys, password encryption using Advanced Encryption Standard and SHA-2 with unique keys, and more. But all of this security means very little if the Filr-enabled directory, volume or share contains sensitive data you don't want users to access or share.

Before enabling a network directory, volume or share for remote access and sharing with Filr, network administrators will want to know what files are being stored there, who has access to these files and even how they got that access. File Reporter* answers all of these questions and more.

In fact, some recent Filr sales contracts have included Novell File Reporter as a result of a simple product demonstration. As part of the Filr product presentation, the sales rep first uses File Reporter to generate a comprehensive report of the file contents and access rights of the network areas that the customer is considering making remotely accessible and sharable through Filr.

Using the report, the sales rep and customer review the contents and determine files to relocate, duplicate files to remove, access rights to adjust and more. When customers learn that Novell File Reporter can continue to provide these reports regularly, they routinely end up buying both products.

Determining What Files to Make Accessible in Filr

One of the more common errors when deploying Filr is enabling *all* of the volumes, shares and directories—and the files within—for remote access and sharing through Novell Filr. This approach is both impractical and diminishes performance.

A much better approach is to determine the most relevant files and have them located in a Filr-enabled directory. You can do this by using File Reporter to determine the most recently accessed and modified files.

Filr

Plenty of Other Reasons

There are a variety of reasons customers want to include File Reporter as part of their Filr deployment. Novell has highlighted some of these in one of its Top Ten flyers - "Top Ten Reasons Why Your Novell Filr Deployment Should Include Novell File Reporter."

This flyer is available from the Resource Library tab on the Filr and File Reporter product pages.

Among the top ten reasons are File Reporter's ability to help:

• Know exactly what's available for access and sharing
• Know what rights users have in Filr-enabled network areas
• Know what groups users have rights to
• Provide on-going reporting
• And much more

Simplifying Filr Deployment with Novell Storage Manager

Directory services enacted policies enable Novell Storage Manager to automate a wide range of file system management tasks. For example, when an event occurs, such as adding a new user to a container or group in NetIQ® eDirectory™ or Active Directory, Storage Manager creates a new home directory according to policy specifications. These specifications include the location of the home directory, the access rights, the disk quota and more.

"Novell Storage Manager [is] an ideal means of enabling a Filr deployment."

Automated file management makes Novell Storage Manager an ideal means of enabling a Filr deployment.

Example 1: Automating Creation of Filr-Enabled Home Directories

Before files can be remotely accessed and shared, they need to be located in a Filr-enabled location on the network. In many cases, these are simply users' home directories. Unfortunately, some organisations don't have network home directories created for all users. That's an issue Storage Manager can solve quickly.

First, find the directory services container where the users for whom you want to create home directories are located. Using Storage Manager's administration tool, simply create a new policy for that directory services container with the specifications you want. Then perform a Management Action to have Storage Manager create all the home directories.

You can then enable each home directory for Filr access and sharing using Filr's administrative tools.

Example 2: Creating and Managing Collaborative Storage Areas in Filr Net Folders

Within Filr Net Folders, you can easily create collaborative storage areas that are restricted to group members.

For example, an IT department at a university might want to create a Net Folder named "Courses." Through a collaborative storage policy, Novell Storage Manager could then create a set of subdirectories within the "Courses" directory for each university course and grant access to these subdirectories according to group membership and the specifications of the collaborative storage policy.

"Within Filr Net Folders, you can easily create collaborative storage areas that are restricted to group members."

So in this example, based on the existence of a "Chem101" group in eDirectory or Active Directory, Storage Manager would create a subdirectory in the "Courses" directory named "Chem101" and only allow students taking Chemistry 101 to have access.

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You can assign students the "Courses" Net Folder, and then, based on their group membership, they would see their specific course folder, such as Chem101. Students can then access their Chemistry documents and files, upload homework assignments, and so on.

Users are always connected to their files using Filr mobile apps (for iPhones, iPads, Android phones and tablets, and Blackberry 10 devices), all the popular web browsers, and a desktop file sync client.

Example 3: Management of Filr-Enabled Home Directories and Personal Folders

Through the establishment and enforcement of policy settings for home directories, Novell Storage Manager can address missing storage quotas, inconsistent home folder attributes, inconsistent home folder rights, missing home folders and inconsistent file paths—putting network home directories in a "managed state."

For Filr-enabled collaborative storage areas managed through Storage Manager, you can enforce similar policy settings for personal folders. Additionally, you can establish which files users can access and share, while preventing users from deleting or modifying these same files.

Novell Dynamic File Services, Dynamic Storage Technology and Filr

Whether it's Novell Dynamic File Services deployed in an Active Directory network, or for eDirectory, Dynamic Storage Technology enabled through Open Enterprise Server, each of these technologies can automate the movement of infrequently accessed files to secondary storage devices.

By archiving these files to secondary storage, your Filr-enabled directories, volumes and shares will contain only relevant data, rather than stale data.

Expanded Integration in the Future

The development teams for Storage Manager and

File Reporter are currently in discussions with the development team for Filr to develop better integration between the products. Some ideas being considered include:

- File Reporter reporting on rights granted through Filr
- Expanded Filr support for collaborative storage and auxiliary storage management in Novell Storage Manager

Conclusion

Novell customers are excited about the remote access and file sharing capabilities of Filr, but are looking for help in securing and simplifying its deployment. Novell file management products can secure Filr-enabled network areas through file content and rights reporting and set access rights through automated policies. These products can also simplify Filr deployment by creating Filr-enabled directories and managing the content within these directories.

Finally, Novell file management products can maintain the security and content management of Filr-enabled home directories and personal folders through enforced policies. By using Novell file management products, you can keep your file system secure and well-managed, ensuring it remains the perfect foundation for your Novell Filr implementation.

For more information on Novell File Management products, see www.novell.com/nfms

Note: Novell File Reporter was featured in a previously published issue of Open Horizons Magazine (see Issue 21 Q1 2013)

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