

FAQ: Hitachi BladeSymphony with Virtage

What are you announcing?

- Hitachi is announcing BladeSymphony with Virtage, the first blade server to provide users with enterprise-class data center functionality.

When is it available?

- BladeSymphony with Virtage will be generally available in January 2007. Several customers, including Stanford's Cardiovascular Biomechanics Laboratory, have already expressed interest in the product.

How long has the division existed?

- Hitachi Ltd. established the server systems business unit in Hitachi America, Ltd. in October 2005 to provide server-based solutions in North America.

How many previous versions of BladeSymphony are available?

- BladeSymphony has been available in the Japan market since 2004. Since then, the system chassis architecture has not changed.

How long has Hitachi been in the server business?

- Hitachi has been in the server business for 40-plus years. BladeSymphony products have been available in the Japan market since the original launch in 2004. In October, 2005, Hitachi, Ltd., established a server systems business unit in Hitachi America, Ltd. to provide server-based solutions in North America.

How is it different from other blade server products?

- BladeSymphony with Virtage is the first blade server product to provide users with enterprise-class data center functionality. Virtage is a breakthrough embedded virtualization feature that builds virtualization right into a blade server's hardware for the first time. BladeSymphony with Virtage is also the only blade server product to include unique blade SMP interconnect technology that improves scalability by enabling users to configure multiple blades so that they work as a single system. BladeSymphony also provides unprecedented I/O expansion in a blade chassis with up to 16 PCI slots.

What is the backplane?

- The backplane, which can also be called a mid-plane, is the physical architecture that enables individual blades to connect to power, management, switch network and I/O modules housed in the chassis. A unique feature of Hitachi BladeSymphony is that multiple blades can interconnect via SMP and act as a single system in one server chassis.

What are the benefits of the blade SMP interconnect backplane (a.k.a mid-plane)?

- BladeSymphony's blade SMP interconnect backplane supports two-socket (four-way) Itanium processor blades that can be scaled up and/or out to offer up to two eight-socket (16-way) servers in a single chassis or eight two-socket(4-way) server, thus reducing footprint and power consumption while increasing utilization. Other benefits of SMP interconnect include performance for applications that can utilize large memory and multiple processor.

What is Virtage?

- Virtage is a breakthrough embedded virtualization feature which builds virtualization right into a blade server's hardware for the first time. It provides customers an alternative to third-party software solutions and thus enables them to decrease overhead costs while increasing manageability and performance.

What are the benefits of embedded virtualization?

- Virtage, Hitachi's breakthrough embedded feature, builds virtualization right into a blade server's hardware for the first time, providing customers an alternative to third-party software solutions and enabling them to decrease overhead costs while increasing manageability, reliability, and performance.

How did Hitachi develop Virtage?

- Hitachi's 40-plus year legacy as a provider of Mainframe technology has allowed Hitachi to evolve its mainframe-class virtualization and embed it into the BladeSymphony chassis.

What is the Intel virtualization technology (VT)?

- Intel virtualization technology is a set of hardware enhancements to Intel® processors that can improve traditional software-based virtualization solutions. VT allows a platform to run multiple operating systems and applications in independent partitions.

What's the difference between your blade technology and grid computing?

- Unlike grid computing, which applies the resources of many computers in a network to a single problem at the same time - usually a problem that requires a great number of computer processing cycles or access to large amounts of data, BladeSymphony with Virtage's unique backplane utilizes a symmetric multiprocessing architecture to enable multiple blades to interconnect up to two eight-processor (16-way) servers in a single chassis.

Is the product customer proven?

- More than 1,000 systems have been shipped in the Japanese market as alternatives to mainframes and UNIX units for mission critical applications in industries such as finance and telecommunications as well as edge tier applications such as web, email, etc. According to the IDC server tracker, BladeSymphony has gained 20 percent market share in less than two years.

How scalable is the system?

- BladeSymphony with Virtage, offered in two-processor (four-way) Itanium processor blades, can be scaled up and out to offer up to two eight-processor (16-way) servers in a single chassis.

How many servers can be used in the system?

- BladeSymphony can be scaled up and out to a maximum configuration of two eight-processor (16-way) servers in a single chassis or eight four-way servers in a single chassis.

Is Blade Symphony interoperable with other vendor systems?

- Yes, BladeSymphony is equipped with industry standard interconnect options to communicate with other server systems.

What are the system's specifications?

- Please go to our web site (www.hitachi.us/servers) for system specifications.

How does this perform in terms of power consumption?

- The blade form factor which let blades servers share common management, I/O, switched network and power modules significantly outperform similar rack mount options in the market.

What are some of the vertical markets you are targeting?

- BladeSymphony with Virtage is ideal for any company running large custom applications and companies actively acquiring other organizations or running other high-growth applications. Industries such as financial services, healthcare, and high-performance computing would find the product most useful.

Does Hitachi provide service and support directly or through third parties?

- The Hitachi support team is able to produce support directly at all levels.