STORAGECRAFT ONEXAFE 4417 CONVERGED STORAGE

StorageCraft’s OneXafe appliances target mid-sized businesses that want to get their data backup and storage houses in order. They go way beyond the capabilities of typical legacy backup appliances by offering a converged scale-out storage and data protection platform for both physical and virtual environments.

In this hands-on review, we look at the OneXafe 4417, a classy 2U appliance built around a top-quality Dell PowerEdge R740xd server platform. Powered by Xeon Scalable CPUs, it supports up to 17 internal LFF hard disks and StorageCraft allows you to bring your own drives or have it delivered preconfigured.

The OneXafe appliances present their storage as SMB or NFS shares and a key feature is StorageCraft’s patented distributed object-based file system, which delivers integral encryption, deduplication and compression. Vastly superior to classic RAID arrays, this technology allows up to seven OneXafe appliances to be placed in a ring, or cluster, where data blocks are automatically distributed across all members and drives for faster rebuilds and on-demand storage expansion.

Management and monitoring is cloud-based and we had no problems registering our appliance with the StorageCraft OneSystem web portal. This presents an intuitive console where we could enable cluster encryption, create users and groups and provision secure access to SMB and NFS shares.

This is a fairly simple use case for the OneXafe which really comes into its own when partnered with the Private OneSystem solution. Hosted on-site as a VMware VM, Private OneSystem joins seamlessly with StorageCraft’s ShadowXafe backup software to deliver converged data protection and full storage management.

The Private OneSystem console amalgamates everything you need for your data protection strategies into a single pane of glass. Its dashboard opens with an overview of system and host protection status along with data usage, throughput and rates of change.

Storage locations are easily defined and you can declare OneXafe repositories along with SMB and NFS shares on third-party devices and iSCSI targets. A smart feature of ShadowXafe is that it can vastly improve backup speeds by communicating directly with the OneXafe repository using the gRPC (Google RPC) protocol and sending data to its object-based storage.

ShadowXafe communicates with the VMware hypervisor for host-based VM backups with Hyper-V support coming soon. For physical system protection, you need to install a small-footprint agent on each one.

Policies determine backup job frequency plus data retention periods and control replication to secondary storage locations such as a remote OneXafe repository or the StorageCraft cloud. Context-based policy management allows backup requirements to be precisely matched to SLAs, RTOs and RPOs and once a policy is assigned to a virtualisation host, it will automatically protect new VMs as they created.

System recovery couldn’t be any easier as you select a machine or VM from the console, view and choose a recovery point and tell it to go ahead. Restoration options abound as, along with direct VM recovery, you can restore a physical machine as a VM and visa-versa.

Bare-metal recovery of physical systems requires a recovery ISO agent to be created on bootable media. This connects with OneSystem, presents a list of recovery points and performs a full system restore.

The VirtualBoot feature offers instant recovery in milliseconds, allowing StorageCraft to claim industry-leading RTOs and RPOs. It’s extremely easy to use as it simply creates a new VM directly from the backup data in the OneXafe repository.

Product: OneXafe 4417 Converged Storage
Supplier: StorageCraft
Web site: www.storagecraft.com
Tel: +44 203 481 1240
Price: Storage only from £19,913, Converged from £41,804 (all ex VAT)

VERDICT: We found the appliance simple to manage and clearly capable of bringing order to data protection chaos. Businesses that can’t afford any data loss downtime will find the StorageCraft OneXafe is an affordable converged protection solution offering lightning-fast recovery and easy scalability.