

# Poor mans NFS Target ...

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[scott\\_k2003](#) 82 posts since

May 16, 2008 I am curious if others have tested the performance of using a server (in this case a 2950) with local or direct attached storage (md1000 or pv220 in this case) and what kind of performance did you see? I would likely be configuring it with RES 5 to serve as a nfs target. I would intend on running 15-20 or more VM's if the performance was sufficient.

We are not allocated the funds for a SAN until next year and we have been making due with local storage. We are throwing a lot of money away by going this route and I was hoping to reuse some of our existing hardware to provide some form of shareable storage at least for the time being.

I am aware of the low cost san and nas alternatives but we are not going to go invest in a low cost route as next year we will be making the investment for a company wide san for mega dollars.



[adolopo](#) 133 posts since

Jul 14, 2006 1. **Re: Poor mans NFS Target** May 28, 2008 2:38 PM

I was actually in the same position you are in (with a previous employer). I think you'll find the numbers/comparisons, to be less than spectacular, but as long as you bring management to light on the "why", it should be enough to justify further expansion on existing ESX infrastructure.



[kjb007](#) 5,476 posts since

Sep 18, 2006 2. **Re: Poor mans NFS Target** May 28, 2008 8:07 PM

I've used FreeNAS and tested with other NFS/iSCSI targets, and found the performance to be ok. They are usually pretty light footprint, and work fairly well. Just don't expect to get the same results you would expect from a stand-alone SAN environment, and you'll be fine.

Check this link for the storage performance thread if you are still evaluating other options for the future:  
<http://communities.vmware.com/thread/73745>

-KjB



[Jasemccarty](#) 3,806 posts since

Apr 5, 2005 3. **Re: Poor mans NFS Target** May 28, 2008 8:46 PM

If you have a Windows 2000/2003 box with enough storage space (or even multiple servers), you can add Services for UNIX, (2003 R2 includes this), and you can make a Windows box a NFS target.

You could piggyback on a file server if you wanted (I'd recommend dedicated nics, and a dedicated network segment for it).

Check out Mike Laverick's article at <http://www.rtfm-ed.co.uk/?p=539> for more info

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Co-Author of [VMware ESX Essentials in the Virtual Data Center](#)

Poor mans NFS Target ...

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[scott\\_k2003](#) 82 posts since

May 16, 2008 4. **Re: Poor mans NFS Target** May 29, 2008 5:22 AM

👤 in response to: [kjb007](#) I have used FreeNAS and presently am using OpenFiler for some applications. We wanted to try and stick with a full distro for added authentication algorithms and replication not possible in either the rpath or bsd distro's. We have a resident linux guru which is why I was thinking this approach. Good options none the less. And as far as performance, thanks.



[scott\\_k2003](#) 82 posts since

May 16, 2008 5. **Re: Poor mans NFS Target** May 29, 2008 5:28 AM

👤 in response to: [Jasemccarty](#) Thanks for the suggestions Jase. I think in our case I would like to stick with a linux option. I have ran 2k3 r2 and 2008 as an NFS target and have not been real impressed with the stability. Whether performance that seems to fluctuate for no easily traced reason or just dropping connections altogether to the point of having to restart to the NFS Server services. I have not experienced this problem with Redhat and we have someone very intimate with the product that can performance tweak for us.

My biggest concern is how well a solution like this could scale with the appropriate disk subsystem in place. I was thinking an 8-10 disk raid 10 array with 15k sas drives whether that is in a pe2900, or attached by an md1000 or pv220. It would be with ample processor, memory and NIC's, likely two teamed at a 1gbps a piece so i would image throughput shouldn't be a huge issue?!



[kjb007](#) 5,476 posts since

Sep 18, 2006 6. **Re: Poor mans NFS Target** May 29, 2008 5:29 AM

👤 in response to: [scott\\_k2003](#)

If you wanted the added features, then I'd say that the RHEL/CentOS or Solaris w/ ZFS underneath would be good options. There have been some issues with Storage Server, so I would stay away from Windows, unless of course you didn't have the expertise, which it appears you do.

You should post your results, and check this thread for actual performance results from various storage:

<http://communities.vmware.com/thread/73745>

-KJB



[scott\\_k2003](#) 82 posts since

May 16, 2008 7. **Re: Poor mans NFS Target** May 29, 2008 5:30 AM

👤 in response to: [adolopo](#) I hear ya. And it sucks. Coming from an environment with a larger investment in technology to an environment 3 x times the size, server wise but lacking any kind of centralized storage is kind of mind boggling. We were running an Equallogic PS300e and CX3-10 at my last employer and here...well


EVERYTHING is in-line or direct attached storage for 350+ servers 😊



[kjb007](#) 5,476 posts since

Sep 18, 2006 8. **Re: Poor mans NFS Target** May 29, 2008 5:36 AM

Poor mans NFS Target ...

 in response to: [scott\\_k2003](#)

First step in solving a problem is knowing that a problem exists. It appears you're already well on your way.

Good luck.

-KjB