

## What is Symantec's vision? October 2008

By Bob Tarzey, Service Director, Quocirca Ltd

In early October 2008 Symantec ran its "Vision" conference in The Hague, the European centre of freedom, security and justice, as its executives were keen to point out. So what is Symantec's vision, does it bear scrutiny, is it delivering on it and was The Hague a good backdrop?

Symantec has grown to be one the world's largest security software companies through serial acquisition, 40 companies or so since chief executive John Thompson took the helm 10 years ago. The vision that drives Symantec today was in fact born in 2004 when it made its biggest acquisition to date, the storage software giant Veritas. This doubled the size of Symantec and turned it into a major player in the enterprise software market.

At the time many were cynical about the wisdom of combining security and storage specialists, but Symantec claimed it made absolute sense as the management of stored data was an essential part of overall information security. In other words Symantec saw the Veritas acquisition as sticking to its knitting, not diversifying.

To understand if it was right back in 2004, it is best to move forward to today. In a climate of increasing regulation about how information is managed it is hard to imagine not having storage management and IT security closely aligned and many other security vendors have extended their reach into storage management or vice versa, two of the biggest being EMC (which acquired RSA) and IBM (which acquired ISS).

Symantec's vision in 2004 was to deliver total content security to its customers including backup, discovery, content-filtering, malware detection and the ability to manage all this. It has strengthened its capabilities in many areas through further acquisitions such as Vontu for data leak prevention (DLP), Cygate for endpoint security, Altiris for endpoint management and so on. It is Quocirca's view that Symantec has a good vision and has delivered on it for a number of years.

There are gaps, but Symantec continues to fill these. One area where Symantec announced its vision was going to take it in to the future was

software as a service (SaaS). But here it floundered; its new Symantec Protection Network, offering offsite backup, email security and remote access, was only going to be available in the US and while Symantec talked about building all this off a single scalable platform, it turned out that email security was referring to an existing white label agreement with MX Logix - not very convincing.

Today we found out why Symantec was so keen to talk about SaaS when it seemed there was a lack of tangible substance, with the announcement that Symantec would be buying the UK-based SaaS security company MessageLabs. This is a great move, powering Symantec straight to the top of the SaaS security league where it will compete with Google/Postini (whose vision is rather different), Websense, Webroot and others, all who have bought their way into the SaaS security market. But MessageLabs was the big daddy, it got the SaaS email security market going and has always been one of its largest players and was the only remaining independent that mattered.

So Symantec takes its vision forward and continues to enhance its market position. Symantec's vision is total content security and, as the MessageLabs acquisition proves, to continue to adapt the way that this is delivered. Furthermore, Symantec going mainstream with SaaS is another huge endorsement for the long-term delivery of functional services in this way.

As for the backdrop to this week's events, The Hague was very pleasant, good accommodation and fine food, with a bracing North Sea view. The conference location was a stone's throw from the International Criminal Tribunal where Radovan Karadžić is being tried. Delegates will be glad they did not have to wait as long to hear about how Symantec would extend its vision for content security and embrace SaaS as the world has done to see him face justice.

### About Quocirca

Quocirca is a primary research and analysis company specialising in the business impact of information technology and communications (ITC). With world-wide, native language reach, Quocirca provides in-depth insights into the views of buyers and influencers in large, mid-sized and small organisations. Its analyst team is made up of real-world practitioners with first hand experience of ITC delivery who continuously research and track the industry and its real usage in the markets.

Through researching perceptions, Quocirca uncovers the real hurdles to technology adoption – the personal and political aspects of an organisation's environment and the pressures of the need for demonstrable business value in any implementation. This capability to uncover and report back on the end-user perceptions in the market enables Quocirca to advise on the realities of technology adoption, not the promises.

Quocirca research is always pragmatic, business orientated and conducted in the context of the bigger picture. ITC has the ability to transform businesses and the processes that drive them, but often fails to do so. Quocirca's mission is to help organisations improve their success rate in process enablement through better levels of understanding and the adoption of the correct technologies at the correct time.

Quocirca has a pro-active primary research programme, regularly surveying users, purchasers and resellers of ITC products and services on emerging, evolving and maturing technologies. Over time, Quocirca has built a picture of long term investment trends, providing invaluable information for the whole of the ITC community.

Quocirca works with global and local providers of ITC products and services to help them deliver on the promise that ITC holds for business. Quocirca's clients include Oracle, Microsoft, IBM, Dell, T-Mobile, Vodafone, EMC, Symantec and Cisco, along with other large and medium sized vendors, service providers and more specialist firms.

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