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# software

PLATEFORMS AND APPLICATIONS

## MARATHON OFFERS LOW-COST OPTIONS FOR SMBs

By Kristen Kennedy

**M**arathon Technologies now offers a lower-cost version of its server-mirroring software in a bid to appeal to a broader customer set.

Costing \$7,500, EverRun HA uses a virtualization architecture to ensure that one of two duplicate Windows servers will be operating at all times, said Greg Phillips, CEO of Littleton, Mass.-based Marathon.

The software can be loaded on one- or two-way servers and has built-in scripts that make continuous availability "virtually plug and play," Phillips said.

Marathon's current higher-end EverRun FT software is based on the same technology and promises 100 percent uptime for about twice the price. The main difference is that EverRun HA offers high availability while EverRun FT promises fault tolerance.

With EverRun HA, if the primary server goes down, its back-up automatically reboots. With EverRun FT, there is a seamless handoff from one server to the other, said Gary Melnick, Marathon's vice president of engineering.

Servers running the EverRun HA package do not have to be using identical components, as required in the higher-end EverRun FT, he added.

Phillips thinks that Marathon's newest product will appeal to companies needing

high availability but can tolerate some downtime. He said a sports network currently uses the FT product for its e-mail server because they need to make sure e-mail is always available without downtime. "That's how they communicate with their reporters in the field," he said. But other companies may need their e-mail available in nearly all cases yet can tolerate an occasional interruption.

"It's really four nines vs. five nines," said Bob Issenberg, president of VTEC, a Burlington, Vt., solution provider.

Issenberg, who specializes in storage and high availability computing, said both of Marathon's software packages offer an alternative to the traditional server cluster, which would be costly to configure and build with the same features available in EverRun. But EverRun HA offers a price point to customers that may have passed on a high-availability solution because of the cost involved.

"We can go after customers we are not involved with today," he said.

Marathon also fields a small services group that provides application availability assessment, and design and integration services for VARs. Application availability assessment will give VARs' customers an evaluation of the impact of downtime on their businesses, as well as a risk assessment. It also will help customers determine if they need the fault-tolerant or high-availability option. The design and integration services will assist partners with design, test and initial systems integration.