

## Plasmon Archive File Manager

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**Author:** Heidi Biggar, Analyst

**Abstract:** Plasmon offers its Archive File Manager to facilitate the movement of static, or persistent, data off primary storage systems—in particular, NAS systems—and onto Plasmon’s UDO Archive Appliance (AA) or Enterprise Active Archive (EAA) platforms.

### Persistent Data Reaches Tipping Point

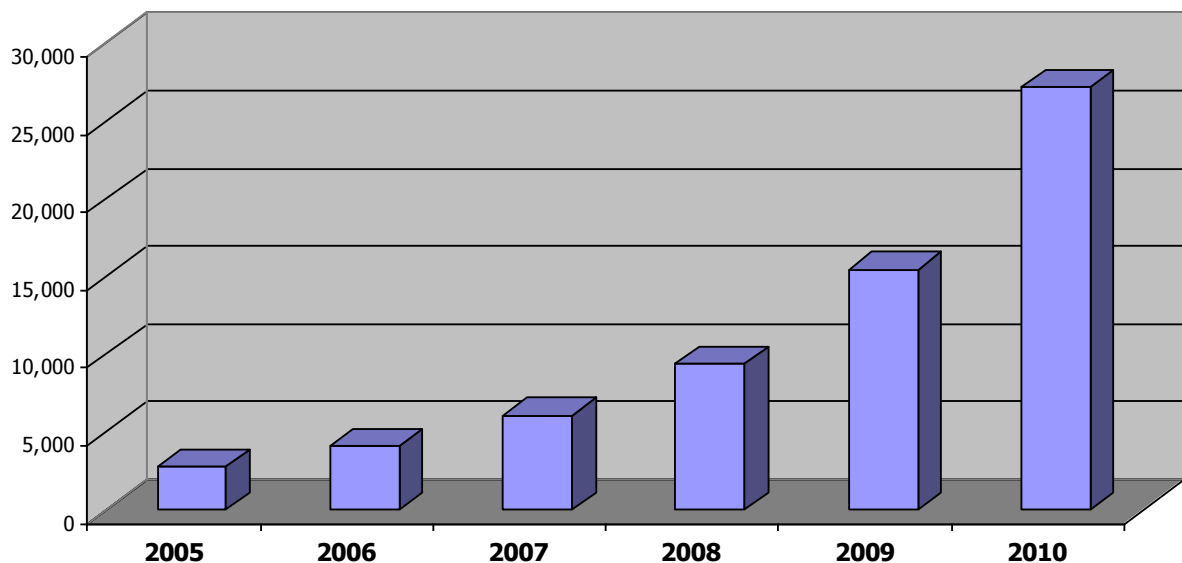
ESG estimates that between 60% and 85% of the data sitting on primary systems today (SAN and NAS) is non-transactional or post-transactional—and half of this data consists of replicas of non-transactional data. This data hasn’t been accessed in 90 days or more. It is static, or persistent.

Why is this data stored on high-end disk? Why do we allocate our most expensive resources to storing and protecting non- and post-transactional data when its attributes are clearly not aligned with those of primary disk?

The answer is simple. Until recently, persistent data was something that organizations paid very little attention to. They either weren’t aware of the extent of the problem or if they were, they didn’t have the right tools to address it. But education, the availability of newer hardware (SATA disk and the UDO Archive Appliance) and software options (which help users identify, classify, move and store this data), as well as dramatic digital archive growth projections have combined to create a tipping point for this market (see Figure 1).

**FIGURE 1. DIGITAL ARCHIVE GROWTH**

**Total Digital Archive Capacity, All Content Types - Worldwide (PB)**



Source: ESG Research Report: Digital Archiving: End-User Survey and Market Forecast 2006 - 2010, 2007

While organizations may be hesitant about having someone poking around in their data centers—in particular, their primary storage systems, we find that when users realize the full extent of their problem (i.e., just how much of their primary data is static and how much this is costing them) and learn how the problem can be fixed with minimal disruption to their existing environments, they quickly become interested. Calculate the benefits in dollar terms, and the value statement of moving persistent data onto appropriate archive tiers can become very compelling very quickly.

By nature, primary disk is more expensive to acquire, manage, power, maintain and protect than secondary storage alternatives. By moving data off primary storage systems and onto lower-cost secondary—or archive—storage tiers, organizations can significantly reduce capital and operational costs while continuing to ensure high availability, security and, importantly, fast access to data.

The cost-savings of implementing an archive tier are the result of a reduction in the footprint of primary storage systems (which has implications from disk acquisition, power and cooling and physical floor space perspectives), a decrease in the amount of persistent data that is backed up repeatedly (which has implications from a disk acquisition and pure management, or man-hour, perspective) and an improvement in the overall accessibility of data on both primary and archive tiers in recovery, regulatory or legal discovery situations.

In Plasmon's case, the archive tier can consist of a stand-alone UDO library, a UDO Archive Appliance (AA) or an Enterprise Active Archive (EAA). The UDO AA consists of UDO media with SATA disk cache and integrated software. The EAA, meanwhile, is a multi-tier archive. It leverages energy-efficient MAID-like SATA disk for the active portion of the archive and UDO AA (with immutable UDO media) for the second or removable disaster recovery copy. Again, the power and cost-savings benefits of either of these implementations can be significant.

### Plasmon Ties Up Loose Ends

With the announcement of Plasmon Archive File Manager—resulting from an OEM relationship with Arkivio—Plasmon adds a key component to its tiered archive strategy: data management. Remember, most organizations:

- 1) Know they have some persistent data on their primary storage systems, but don't know just how much because they can't accurately "size" or "assess" the problem.
- 2) Haven't done anything about persistent data they do have because they lack the tools to easily move the data onto more appropriate archive tiers.

The Plasmon Archive File Manager integrates with the UDO Archive Appliance and the Enterprise Archive Appliance, and makes it easy for organizations to both identify and move persistent data off primary storage systems. Often, these two capabilities are enabled by two products, not one. This is a critical selling point for Plasmon. However, Plasmon also realizes that some users may not need or want both pieces—and in response, has made two packages available: a Standard Edition—which is offered at a lower price point and does data movement only—and an Expanded Edition, which performs auto-discovery, data classification and report generation plus data movement.

In terms of data movement, users set policies through the Archive File Manager GUI to determine which data is moved and when. When data attributes meet these policies, the data is moved automatically from its primary storage location to the appropriate archive tier (i.e., either UDO AA or EAA). If UDO is the target, a second, removable copy of the data can also be made and stored off-site for compliance or regulatory purposes.

### What Is "Persistent Data?"

#### Data that is:

- ✓ Fixed and unchanging.
- ✓ Infrequently accessed.
- ✓ Kept for long-periods of time due to regulatory, legal, corporate or other requirements.
- ✓ Generated by backup and recovery applications, unstructured or file-based data applications, record and content management applications, etc.

While the Archive File Manager software can be applied to SAN and DAS storage as well as NAS storage, Plasmon has zoomed in on the NAS market as a strong first bet. In particular, Plasmon has its sights set on the large volumes of static, or persistent, data currently sitting on EMC Celerra, IBM N-Series and NetApp filers. Archive File Manager is agent-less, which means no software has to be installed on participating NAS devices; it uses integrated NAS file management technology to communicate with these devices. The Archive File Manager allows data to be migrated, moved or copied, depending on availability and retention requirements and maintains security and retention requirements on the original filer.

ESG believes Plasmon's decision to focus on NAS is a smart one. It is a market with a clear, underlying pain point: the proliferation of NAS devices. However, that being said, while the idea of reclaiming NAS disk space by getting persistent data off it may be appealing to users, Plasmon has the added hurdle of having to sell users on its UDO Archive Appliance or EAA. Here again, we advise Plasmon to lead with EAA because it provides alternative disk and UDO solutions, rather than limiting users to UDO only<sup>1</sup>.

Plasmon has earmarked these solutions for organizations that have more than 100 employees, more than 10 TB of total storage, more than 5 TB of unstructured data and are experiencing significant growth as its primary market opportunity. Representative target industries include the usual suspects: financial, manufacturing, medical and media/entertainment. Regulatory compliance is a cornerstone of Plasmon's UDO Archive Appliance and Enterprise Active Archive because it helps customers enforce retention periods with its secure WORM media.

### The Bottom Line

Plasmon clearly understands the problem growing stockpiles of "persistent data" is presenting to end-users and is continuing to build a well-architected product and marketing plan around it. The ability to help users both identify and classify the data they have sitting on primary storage and then move it automatically to secondary storage has the potential to be a huge selling point for Plasmon. ESG isn't aware of any other vendors—even big ones—with a more targeted package.

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<sup>1</sup> see ESG Brief: *Plasmon Multi-Tier Enterprise Active Archive*