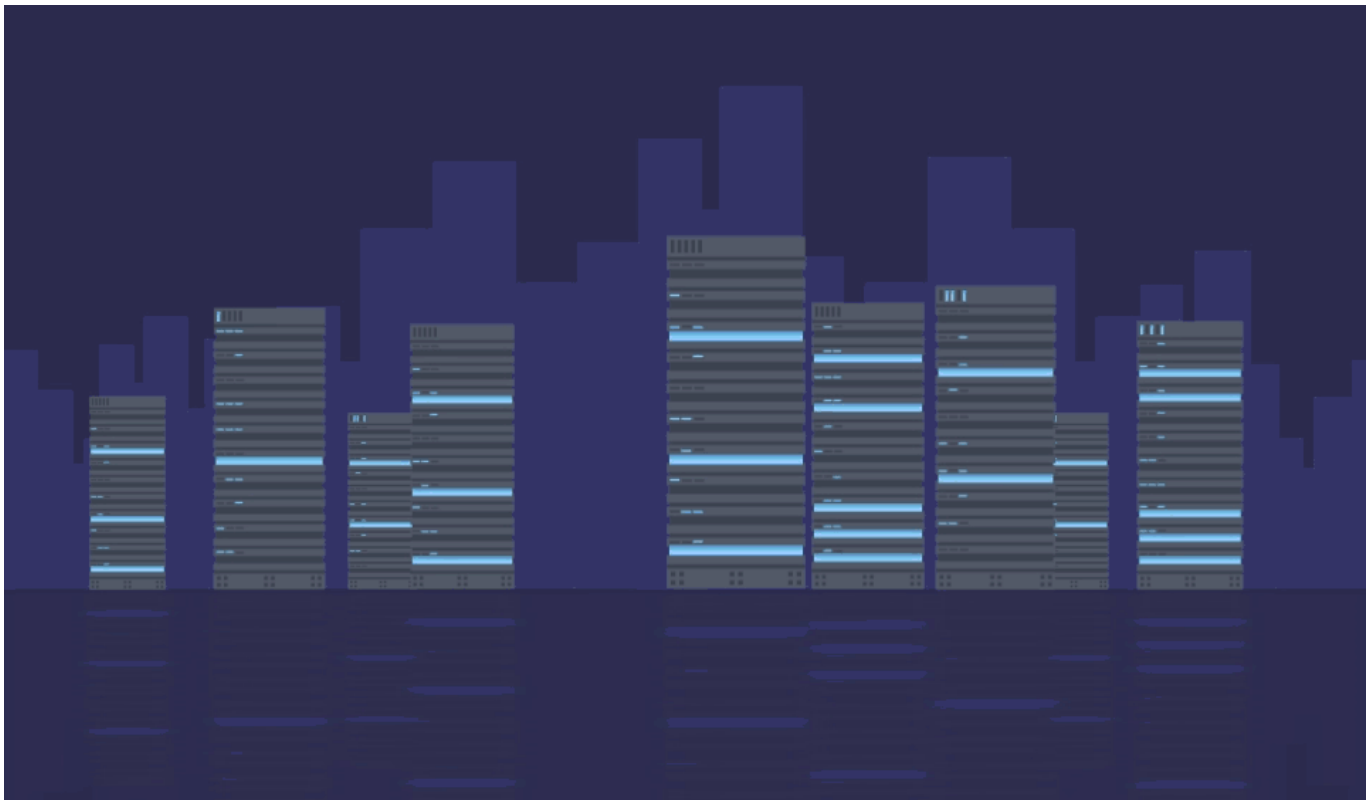
Has the Generic Hardware Boom Ended?



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Taking a lead from the mega-data centers used by Amazon and Google, software-defined storage (SDS) was expected to revolutionize hardware usage. CTOs would be able to build vast, scalable storage platforms using generic, low-cost hardware. In doing so, the cost of storage would reduce dramatically.

A very different reality

The latest Q1 storage market statistics from Gartner reveal a very different picture. First, storage shipments continue to grow, topping 17.3% year-on-year. Second, HPE ceded 4% of total market share – but not to white label vendors as expected.

The latest market share statistics suggest that the OEMs are still doing very well, extending their lead in the server storage space. If CTOs *are* choosing SDS, it is more likely to be an OEM variant, rather than a 'true' software-defined platform built on generic hardware.

Why?

SDS works well for mega-scale operations like Google and Amazon. Their enormous purchasing power allows them to design and build their own server solutions, so the system works well for them.

But for smaller businesses– even if they are enterprise-class– off-the-shelf servers make more sense. Conceptually, SDS should work for any business, but lack of experience and trust in the technology means that most are choosing to stick with what they know: pre-built, pre-configured servers from an OEM.

It is worth noting that although 'white box server' shipments topped 920,000 in Q1, the vast majority went to cloud service providers Microsoft, Facebook, Amazon and Google.

Maybe later

Whether SDS will really take off in the corporate data center remains unclear. Each of the OEMs is now delivering their own SDS-influenced platforms with varying levels of success. But it may be that most businesses decide that designing and deploying infinitely scalable architecture is a task best handled by cloud providers.

Whatever happens, Gartner's latest figures show that the on-site data center is alive and well, and that the humble storage server is still in very good health.

To learn more about extending the life of your existing storage servers– and to avoid buying new assets unnecessarily– please **get in touch**.