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# FalconStor VTL 1000

## OVERALL RATINGS

<b>Installation</b>	☹☹	Installation documentation was inaccurate.
<b>Manageability/Configuration</b>	☺☺☺☺	Very manageable, but a media wizard would be nice.
<b>Operation/Functionality</b>	☺☺☺☺☺	The system operated without problems.
<b>Recoverability</b>	☺☺☺☺☺	Includes replication and active/active failover.
<b>Problem Resolution and Support</b>	☹☹	Some requests for service languished for days and were resolved only after escalation to public relations.
<b>Interoperability</b>	☺☺☺☺☺	Resold by a number of major OEMs and has support from most of the industry.
<b>User Level</b>	■	Requires a storage administrator with an average level of experience.
<b>List Price as Tested</b>		Price will vary depending up OEM, reseller and configuration.

Scale: 1 flame = poor; 2 flames = fair; 3 flames = satisfactory; 4 flames = very good; 5 flames = excellent

User level: ● = novice; ■ = intermediate; ◆ = advanced; ◆◆ = experts only

## PRODUCT SUMMARY

FalconStor's virtual tape library (VTL) engine has been adopted by a variety of OEM vendors, including EMC, Sun and IBM. Given our prior reviews of EMC CLARiiON Disk Library based on FalconStor VTL (see separate review), we were familiar with its capabilities. For this review, we worked directly with the manufacturer, although FalconStor sells primarily through resellers and OEMs. We wanted to see what differences a user might experience when working directly with someone other than an OEM. FalconStor VTL 1000 is a complete VTL product that will address the preponderance of user needs from a technical perspective. Our experience during this review, however, leads us to believe that IT organizations may benefit from the greater resources that an OEM can provide.

The VTL 1000 that we reviewed was based on a Linux-based dual-processor Intel server. Unfortunately, our experience with the product did not begin well. Upon booting the system, the logon information provided in the Quick Start guide was rejected by the system. We placed a call to FalconStor's technical support group. After four days, we still had not gotten a call back. We escalated the call to the public relations group and the vice president level. Eventually we got a response. This concerned us, as most IT organizations do not have the leverage of a public relations contact. The vendor instructed us to return the unit, saying that a replacement would be sent right away. After waiting two weeks for the new unit, we again escalated the call to public relations whereupon the unit was shipped overnight.

The second hardware configuration that we received operated properly. We followed the cabling instructions for the two Ethernet ports, one of which is DHCP enabled. However, the system could not be discovered by DHCP. Upon troubleshooting, we discovered that the Ethernet ports were labeled backwards in the documentation. FalconStor explained that the underlying operating system had recently changed and it recognized the ports in reverse order. The documentation had not yet been updated.

### About the Review

*Diogenes Analytical Laboratories and SearchStorage.com teamed together to create disk-to-disk buyer's guidelines that help IT buyers differentiate between products and select the best candidates for their own situation. For this report, we took 13 different products into the lab and ran them through their paces. We compared products based on ease-of-use, manageability, features/functions and technical support systems. Our opinions are based on the experience of more than a decade of implementing and managing data protection systems.*

The product worked flawlessly once we got it up and running. We configured the virtual library as a Sun StorEdge L180 with four IBM LTO-2 virtual drives. These devices were auto-discovered and were able to perform backup and restores just as with a physical tape library. If a physical library is attached to the VTL 1000, then barcodes are mapped between the two units. If a physical library is not attached, then the virtual media must be created manually, a process that is performed outside the wizard.

The VTL 1000 has a host of features that we believe are very useful for IT organizations. These include:

1. Disk compression, both software and hardware
2. Virtual tape encryption

3. WORM virtual media
4. IBM iSeries support
5. Comprehensive alerting and reporting
6. Active/active failover
7. Remote replication

There is no question that VTL 1000 is very sound from a feature/function standpoint. Organizations should have little trouble adapting to its operation and fitting it into their backup infrastructure. We hope the support issues that we experienced were merely the result of an organization stretched thin and are not the norm. Our main complaints were with hardware and support, which end users would normally receive from someone other than FalconStor. A FalconStor OEM or value-added reseller may provide the ideal combination of solid technology and a large support organization.

## DIFFERENTIATING FEATURES AND FUNCTIONS

FEATURE/FUNCTION	DESCRIPTION
<i>Data security</i>	<i>VTL 1000 includes virtual tape encryption and virtual WORM media.</i>
<i>Broad platform support</i>	<i>In addition to supporting various open systems environments, VTL 1000 also support the IBM iSeries</i>
<i>Comprehensive functionality</i>	<i>The system has a complete set of features and functions. The only thing we'd add is data de-duplication.</i>

## BUYER GUIDANCE

### ***Kudos:***

VTL 1000 is one of the more comprehensive products from a feature/function standpoint. We had no problems operating the system, and it will be intuitive for experienced backup professionals.

### ***Caveat:***

FalconStor's support seemed to be stretched thin, but the system can be procured from a number of OEMs.

### ***Who should consider this product:***

FalconStor VTL will appeal to a broad range of organizations, from medium-scale enterprises on up.

## ABOUT DIOGENES ANALYTICAL LABORATORIES, INC

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