

The Proper Role of a DCIG Buyer's Guide

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The attention the 2015-16 All-Flash Array Buyer's Guide is receiving illustrates how impactful DCIG Buyer's Guides are in the market and how many individuals use them as a resource when making buying decisions. It also helps to illustrate how highly vendors regard these Guides. However, DCIG has never claimed that its Buyer's Guides are the "end-all, be-all" of product research; nor does DCIG profess to possess all of the answers that organizations may need to make the right buying decision.

DCIG Buyer's Guides serve as a valuable resource in helping organizations accelerate the early phases of the product research process. Each DCIG Buyer's Guide enables organizations to quickly identify and evaluate specific products and product features in a particular market segment in order to establish a short list of products of particular interest to them. This is the premise upon which the DCIG Buyer's Guides were developed and the function that they were intended to serve.

Organizations should view the DCIG Buyer's Guides as a tool to help them ask the right questions when creating a short list of products to evaluate. This enables prospective purchasers to focus their product evaluation energies on those selected arrays and move more quickly to the competitive bid process.

Beyond core feature comparison functionality, each DCIG Buyer's Guide provides a succinct analysis of the marketplace and of the key features and benefits organizations should look for as they evaluate products. Organizations can also take advantage of DCIG's normalized storage terminology to

facilitate their internal discussions.

DCIG Buyer's Guides Reflect DCIG's Opinion

DCIG's classification of each Buyer's Guide as "opinion" as opposed to "fact" may come as a shock to people who review DCIG Buyer's Guides and who leverage the data sheets included in them. However DCIG holds this position for the following reasons:

1. DCIG develops each Buyer's Guide around a particular purchase decision and use case. These influence both what products are included and DCIG's view of the value of various features to an end user—which together determine the final rankings
2. DCIG does neither product feature nor performance testing
3. DCIG does not get feedback from every vendor about their product(s)
4. Vendors and/or end-user organizations may differ from DCIG and one another in how they define a feature (this fact is one of the primary reasons end users need a resource like the DCIG Buyer's Guides—to normalize terminology and make side-by-side comparisons possible)
5. Product features constantly change. Features supported at the time of DCIG's evaluation may change prior to the Guide being published
6. Product information may not be publicly accessible or easily found, and the data that is publicly accessible may be out of date.

While there are additional reasons as to why DCIG classifies each of its Buyer's Guides as opinion as opposed to fact, the above six (6) points provide a framework as to why organizations should view the data contained in each Buyer's Guide as DCIG's opinion on product feature support.

A case in point is the data that DCIG published about the EMC

XtremIO in the DCIG 2015-16 All-Flash Array Buyer's Guide. When one compares DCIG's data about this particular product with what EMC says is accurate, it's clear that DCIG's definitions of some features are different than EMC's. This illustrates how different individuals and/or organizations looking at the same product feature may arrive at different conclusions.

For instance, EMC says XtremIO supports replication through integration with RecoverPoint. That statement is correct from EMC's viewpoint, but requires the purchase of separate replication appliances. For the purposes of this DCIG Buyer's Guide, replication means the array can natively replicate data to another storage array from the same storage provider. (No additional hardware required.) To the best of DCIG's knowledge, EMC XtremIO does not meet that criterion. Several other claims are based on a similar difference in definitions.

Vendors Given Another Opportunity Provide Data Sheet Feedback Through October 31

Vendors are more than welcome to reach out to us directly if they are not satisfied that the data sheets accurately represent product features. While outside our normal process, DCIG will, at no charge until the end of this month (October 31), give vendors the opportunity to provide feedback on their product(s) datasheets. Once we have the feedback, DCIG will update, as appropriate, the published version of this Buyer's Guide prior to putting out another revised version of the Buyer's Guide (if necessary) in early November that contains any updated information that DCIG receives. *This will be a one-time opportunity for our vendors.*

DCIG does not plan to change the product rankings in any updated version of the Buyer's Guide for two reasons:

1. The rankings are unquestionably DCIG's opinion as they represent DCIG's understanding of the product's features

at the conclusion of our research and time of publication of the Guide.

2. Updating the rankings now would not be fair to the vendors who met the pre-publication deadlines. Each vendor had the opportunity to review and provide feedback on their respective product surveys and data sheets before the publication of the Buyer's Guide. The vendors have all previously witnessed the impact that prior DCIG Buyer's Guide have had on the market place.

As such, while DCIG wants the data provided to organizations to be as complete and up-to-date as possible, DCIG does not wish to reward the inability and/or unwillingness of vendors to respond to DCIG's requests for information about their product(s) prior to the publication of the Guide.

DCIG welcomes vendors to contact us at any time outside the DCIG buyer's guide cycle to discuss how their products are being represented. In fact, DCIG even makes its [Supplier Evaluation Software](#) and database of questions available to any organization (vendors, resellers or VARs) so they can make their own determinations about whether product feature support matches their definition, how specific features should be weighted and products ultimately ranked. DCIG makes no apologies for its process or the results it published.

Please reach out to DCIG at 1.844.DCIGLLC (324.4552) to request to speak to the appropriate DCIG representatives about your particular interests.

In a forthcoming blog entry in this series, DCIG will discuss the value of feature-based comparisons.