

# Didigy advances IP storage space

Jeanne-Vida Douglas

As world leaders gathered in Sydney on September 8 last year for the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation conference, little did they know their images were being captured, transmitted and stored using a range of emerging technologies. In particular, digital cameras that transmit images using internet protocols (IP) and storage virtualisation.

The brainchild of Didigy Group's managing director, Graeme McGeorge, the IP cameras enable customers to access images in real time via browser software on any web-enabled device, including 3G phones.

"At the moment, about 90 per cent of video surveillance technology features analog cameras that are attached locally to a digital video recorder," Mr McGeorge said. "Large IP surveillance systems have been limited because once you're talking about petabytes of storage, a traditional storage area network just wouldn't cope."

Over six months he considered a number of different technologies to overcome data transfer bottlenecks and secure sufficient storage to

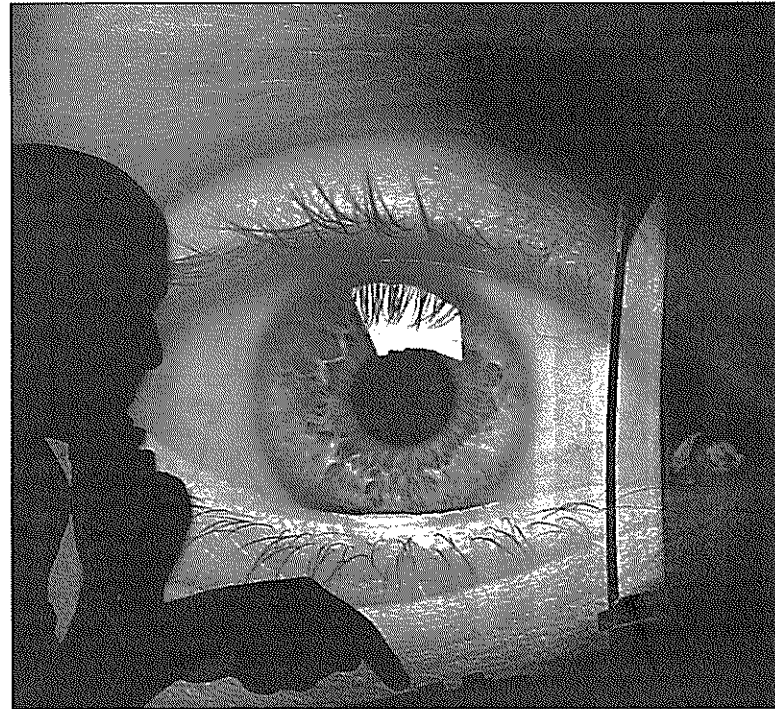
make the IP camera technology viable.

"We spent nearly six months developing the model, but the cost of buying and running high-availability storage was prohibitive," he said. "It was going to cost us \$50,000 to secure a fully redundant server set up in a secure data centre."

Ultimately Didigy Group opted for a fully virtualised environment, offered by Melbourne-based SmartyHost. Operating out of Optus's Sunshine Datacentre in Melbourne, and using VMware virtualised servers and Hitachi Data systems virtualised storage technology, the data centre-on-demand service, called Vigabyte, costs between \$49 and \$99 a month for 40 gigabytes of storage and 10GB of data transfer.

"It's about moving storage from a capex to an opex environment, where businesses only pay for what they are using as they go and can adjust according to seasonal demand," explained SmartyHost managing director Anoosh Manzoori.

"Customers manage their infrastructure requirements through a browser-based control panel."



**Set your sights . . . storage virtualisation seeks to improve efficiency and boost the use of a range of different, dedicated storage devices.** Photo-illustration: MAYU KANAMORI

Like server virtualisation, storage virtualisation seeks to improve the efficiency and increase the use of a range of different, dedicated storage devices, by adding a layer of data management technology.

Nonetheless, the applicability of storage virtualisation to multi-vendor corporate environments has yet to be demonstrated, according to Kevin McIsaac, storage-focused

adviser for research group IBRS. "It may work in this case because there is a very specific business model," he said, "but if you're asking me if the technology would work in a corporate environment I'd say no, because you're adding an extra layer of complexity, and introducing multiple vendors into a storage environment when it's not necessary."