SNIA
DATA MANAGEMENT FORUM

XAM POSITION STATEMENT

WHAT IS XAM?

XAM refers to a technology. The acronym stands for "eXtensible Access Method". XAM is a technology in standardization within SNIA. Its implementations are expected to be several types of interfaces between applications and storage systems that coordinates metadata to achieve interoperability, storage transparency, and automation for ILM-based practices, long term records retention, and information assurance (security).

WHAT IS THE XAM-INTERFACE?

The XAM-Interface is an application-level interface coordinating information metadata between applications and storage systems which is in standardization within SNIA[1]. This new interface (the technology is named XAM as an acronym for "eXtensible Access Method") gives applications a standard interface and metadata to communicate with object storage devices such as those characterized as "Fixed Content Aware Storage" to achieve interoperability, storage transparency, and automation for ILM-based practices, long term records retention, and information assurance (security).

WHAT IS SNIA'S VISION FOR THE XAM-INTERFACE?

SNIA's vision is that the XAM-Interface will become the ubiquitous interface between applications and storage. The first deliverable, the XAM-API, provides for encapsulating application data, application metadata, and storage services metadata as part of the 'content record,' thus empowering interoperability between storage systems and applications and automating ILM-based practices. Meta-data is the key to automating and instrumenting information classification and operating to ILM-based policies independent of the application.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO THE CUSTOMER?

- The XAM-Interface will provide interoperability and interchangeability between various applications and fixed content aware storage systems
- It will simplify and standardize the application-to-storage interface for fixed content, reference information, or similar types of information, making this interface more reliable, secure, and scalable.
- It facilitates the automation of storage migration - a critical problem for electronic archives which require storage media migrations every 3-5 years as a compliance or best-practices requirement
- It provides the metadata framework to aid in the automation of ILM Practices

[1] The FCAS, Fixed-Content Aware Storage, TWG is the technical working group charted by SNIA to develop standards around 'fixed-content aware storage' including the XAM-Interface

- The object oriented and location and technology independent approach empower the shift towards Enterprise Grids and Data Grids and when coupled with ILM-based practices, provides a new information management model that is needed for Grid adoption

To find out more go to the SNIA's website, www.snia-dmf.org/xam