



A Pizza-Box Server that Delivers

BY JOEL SANTO DOMINGO



A small business or branch office often needs the power and dedicated use of a server. Tasks like front-end database development, intranet hosting, and domain/DNS serving, for instance, are not quite meant for a desktop PC. IBM makes it possible to get a suitable server at a desktop price (\$1,485 direct, without OS) with the **IBM eServer xSeries 306**.

The xSeries 306 is a 1U rack-mounted unit. Like most entry-level servers, the unit has only one CPU—in this case the Prescott 3.0-GHz Pentium 4. Further positioning this server in the market is its single 80GB 7,200-rpm SATA hard drive (no SCSI drive arrays here).

While the single hard drive is “simple swap,” or on an easily removable sled, like all SATA drives it requires you to power down the server to make a switch. Hot-swap SCSI drives and associated hardware do cost more, of course, and it’s not just for their ease of replacement. For mission-critical data and data that needs to be accessed constantly, 15,000-rpm SCSI drives in a RAID configuration are still the performance kings.

In terms of performance, the xSeries 306 is not a barn burner



IF YOU NEED

AN AFFORDABLE SERVER for a branch

office or small office, the IBM eServer xSeries 306 is worth a look.

(nor is it meant to be, as configured). Still, the combination of dual on-board Gigabit NICs, P4 processor, and 512MB DDR333 SDRAM handled our WebBench tests admirably, showing that under moderate load the unit can easily handle routine Web serving. At 20 clients during our static test, the throughput was 112 million bytes per second. Our NetBench tests, however, show the limitations of the single-drive configuration. While the response time grew gradually up to 32 virtual clients, it rose steeply beyond that in further testing. But xSeries 306 will prove more than robust enough for a simple file-sharing load.

What really impressed us, though, is the excellent IBM Director network management software that comes with the server. Director al-

lows central IT to manage remote networks. The xSeries 306 can also be used along with the Remote Deployment manager to manage branch offices, including pushing new disk images to desktop and notebook clients, ensuring that remote offices are as up to date with software patches and current applications as the home office.

When you consider the ease of use that IBM’s software provides, as well as the attractive price, the xSeries 306 is a good buy in an entry-level server.

IBM eServer xSeries 306

With 3.0-GHz Intel Pentium 4 with SSE3 (Prescott), 512MB DDR333 SDRAM, 80GB 7,200-rpm SATA hard drive, integrated ATI Radeon 7000 graphics, CD-ROM drive, integrated sound card, \$1,485 direct. IBM Corp., www.ibm.com. ●●●●●

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