Welcome to This Week on developerWorks. I'm your host, Calvin Powers. If you're running a large-scale AIX installation, you'll probably have more hdisk than you know what to do with, and it's hard to keep track of them all. And if you're running a system backed by IBM System Storage SAN Volume Controller, you've got even a more difficult time keeping track of the hdisks and where they relate to the volumes on SVC.

Brian Smith joins me this week as my guest on developerWorks. He's a system administrator and he's got a lot of experience with AIX, PowerVM, shell scripting, pro programming and Linux. And he's just published a very handy how-to guide on how to keep track of your hdisks and their corresponding SVC volumes. Brian, welcome to This Week on developerWorks. Tell us a little bit about why you decided to write this guide.

SMITH: Well, thanks, Calvin, for having me on this week. I'm excited to be here. So, I wrote this article. It's geared for anyone who has AIX servers and IBM SAN Volume Controller -- or, SVC -- in their environment. And if you have both of those in your environment, you really need to be able to understand the relationship between the AIX hdisks and the SVC volumes on the SVC.

And the reason why you need to be able to understand that is if you're doing maintenance, like say you're trying to reclaim some space, you'll need to go through on your AIX server and delete the hdisk and then go over on the SVC and delete the SVC volume.

And if you don't understand the relationship between that hdisk and the SVC volume, you might get in a situation where you accidentally delete the wrong SVC volume. And if you do that, you're going to be looking at a server down and potentially having to restore data, and that's not a situation you want to get into.

So, the article is geared to understand how you can understand that relationship between several AIX hdisks you see over there and your SVC volumes and how they relate and match up together.

POWERS: Your article does a great job of walking people step by step how to do that, and we will post the article at the episode page at ibm.com/developerworks/thisweek. But just briefly can you walk us through the steps on how you would do this manually?

SMITH: Yes. So, what you do is you'd start over on your AIX server and you'd run the command PCM path query device. What this will do is it will show you a list of all the lines that your AIX server sees. You'll see a list of hdisks and serial numbers. And you'll take that list and then you'll go over and log into your SVC and you'll go over to the volume section and you'll see a list of the volumes, and each volume will have a UID number.

And what you're trying to do is find the serial number you found over on AIX and find the SVC UID number that matches up with that serial number. And when you find the two numbers that match, then you know that that AIX hdisk is backed by that SVC login. And there will be a one-to-one relationship there. Each AIX hdisk serial number will have a corresponding SVC UID number that will match up with one of those serial numbers from AIX.

POWERS: I could imagine that if you start getting a large number of those hdisks that the manual process becomes tiresome very quickly. And like any good system administrator, I understand you've written a script to automate this task. You want to tell us a little bit about that?

SMITH: Yes. So, like you said, you can do this joint with a couple of SVC volumes. You can do this pretty quickly manually. But if you did it in a large environment, it quickly becomes impractical and too time-consuming to do it manually.

So, I wrote a script that was included with the article on developerWorks. And what this script does is it...you run it from your AIX server, and it will collect a bunch of information from your AIX server, and then it will also connect to the SVC and collect information from there.

And it combines the information from your AIX server and your SVC and creates a report that will show the information from your AIX server such as the hdisk name, the volume group, the size of the run. And then it also combines, for each of those it will show the corresponding SVC information for that hdisk such as the SVC volume name and the UID number. So, you basically get all the information from the AIX server and the SVC combined into one easy to read report that's easy
POWERS: Sounds like a great tool, Brian. I'm sure there's lots of system administrators that could really benefit from having that report. And I know people are going to want to get their hands on that script.

And folks, you can do that, once again, at the episode page at ibm.com/developerworks/thisweek. We'll have a link to Brian's article and you can read through step by step how to do it manually, or you can get access to the script as well. That's all the time we have for This Week on developerWorks. We'll see you next week.

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