

EMC unveils a new flash-drive

By Melita Marie Garza

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EMC Corp., the world's largest maker of data-storage computers, introduced systems that use flash memory instead of hard-disk drives, an effort to serve customers such as banks that process a lot of information quickly.

The computers are as much as 10 times faster and almost 40 percent more energy-efficient than those with hard disks, Hopkinton-based EMC said yesterday in a statement. They are targeted initially at financial-services clients, including currency exchanges and electronic trading systems.

Chief Executive Officer Joseph Tucci is working to maintain EMC's lead over Hewlett-Packard Co. and International Business Machines Corp., which are ranked second and third in the disk-storage market, according to industry researcher IDC. He has added new products and pushed EMC into software and services, spending \$8 billion on acquisitions since 2003.

"Sales will come first from their banking and other performance-oriented customers, but the more the technology is adopted, the more it will become affordable for other industries," said John Webster, an analyst with Illuminata Inc., a research firm in Nashua, N.H. EMC's competitors will follow its lead, he said.

Unlike hard-disk drives, flash-memory chips don't have any moving parts, making them faster and more energy efficient. The drives will be available in two sizes — 73 gigabytes and 146 gigabytes — later in the first quarter, the company said.

The drives are designed for EMC's high-end Symmetrix DMX-4 storage system. STEC Inc., based in Santa Ana, Calif., will make the drives for EMC, STEC said yesterday in a statement.

EMC rose 80 cents, or 5 percent, to \$16.80 at 4 p.m. in New York Stock Exchange composite trading. The shares have advanced 18 percent in the past year.