Preface to the "Next-generation IT Platforms Creating New Value through Big Data" Special Features

Munehiro Hashimoto
Division Vice President
Disk Array Systems Division
Information & Telecommunication Systems Company
Hitachi, Ltd.

CLOUD computing has been receiving a great deal of attention, and is starting to be rapidly and widely adopted by companies. Cloud-based mail, SNS (social networking services), blogs, and other applications have been growing in popularity, with uses such as the distribution and sharing of not just text, but also audio, images, and video entering the mainstream. In addition, on-site information acquired by sensors, RFID (radio-frequency identification) tags, and other such items affixed to products, devices, structures, and other objects is also starting to be accessible via the cloud.

This wide variety and large amount of data is referred to as "Big Data," and a movement has begun among corporations to utilize collected data for marketing purposes, as well as to link this data to the development of products, services, and new businesses. Social infrastructure applications including smart grids, water quality management, traffic control, and crime prevention are expected to be developed. Against this background, information systems are faced with requirements to collect, accumulate, and analyze necessary information from within an unprecedentedly huge amount of widely varying information, in order to create new "knowledge."

The first article "Next-generation IT Platforms Delivering New Value through Accumulation and Utilization of Big Data" describes the overall picture of the IT platforms working to process these tremendous amounts of data. The following articles introduce our efforts in the areas of cloud solutions, middleware, servers, storage, and networks, as well as the unified platform project that was launched in North America (Hitachi Unified Compute Platform). Additional topics introduced include the future direction of middleware and the state of research and development.

It is my hope that these special features will not only help you understand Hitachi's various efforts, but that the solutions and products we provide will assist you in conducting your business while bringing a spirit of innovation to society, by any means possible.