Market Roundup

November 18, 2005

CA Has Visions of Enterprise Management

By Joyce Tompsett Becknell

At CA World this week, CA made several announcements. Perhaps the most interesting to us was the announcement of Enterprise IT Management (EITM), their vision for unifying and simplifying IT management across the enterprise. In support of the vision, CA also announced twenty-six EITM-enabled products within their portfolio, ranging from management to security, that are driven by business policies and automated workflows which CA believes will ensure continuous alignment and optimization of IT infrastructure. The products are integrated with the CA Integration platform, which has a workflow engine, management database (MDB), shared policies, and a consistent user interface. CA uses a Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) to deliver management and security services across products. CA has taken an architectural approach to management, believing this is the best way to tie together management of the entire IT environment, which they define to include end users, infrastructure, data, applications, IT services, and business processes.

Management of IT infrastructure is an evolving concept that is crucial if IT is expected to interact with business processes effectively. IT managers need to be able to treat their IT infrastructure as one entity made up of many interacting parts, which implies that management has to be able to understand the interdependence of the various parts within the whole. One of the problems with the way IT has developed has been the emergence of silos within IT. Traditionally they were treated independently of each other such that there were exit application silos as well as infrastructure silos and even management silos focused on their particular application or infrastructure. Even between products from the same vendor there have been frequent issues around product integration. The theory is that integration lowers the cost and difficulty of managing effectively. Users who have CA products will hopefully find that management has gotten easier and may have more reason to use more CA within their infrastructure. This is important as software always has stronger loyalty than hardware on the principle that software is the product the customer touches more frequently. It is important for CA to make its move sooner rather than later as its competitors are also attempting to gain the same client mindshare through their management capabilities.

One area where we think CA has certainly gotten it right is in making sure that their storage management software is integrated from the beginning and that everything is done from a higher, architectural level. Looking at data, applications, services, and processes is the right way to approach management, and the role of individual devices or classes of devices falls into its proper context based upon a data set or application. Additionally, we've seen an awful lot of activity within the storage management space recently, but it is refreshing to find a vendor who believes that storage management is one piece of the larger management structure rather than something that should be developed independently for now and maybe one day will fit in with the rest of IT management. To get the fragmented bits of IT to function as a whole, one needs to begin with the end in mind.

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Banking on the Virtualized Client Infrastructure

By Clay Ryder

IBM has announced the IBM Systems Solutions for Branch Banking targeted at financial services and banking customers seeking to centralize operations while reducing overhead costs. The new solution offers customers a pre-configured, pre-tested, and scalable maintain platform built on Intel Xeon-based IBM BladeCenter and xSeries platforms on which to consolidate branch infrastructure. It includes software, networking, and security features so that administrators can monitor operations and centrally deploy software to branch locations. Systems Solutions for Branch Banking offers a variety of solution options including VMware virtual infrastructure on a blade, Altiris Deployment Solution provisioning systems, and Datacom Systems video surveillance system blade. In addition, IBM also announced the next solution in its Virtualized Hosted Client Infrastructure portfolio targeted at bank branches and credit institutions. The solution is based on VMware to host multiple users of desktop environments on a single blade within IBM BladeCenter and leverages ClearCube client access technologies to increase efficiency in resource utilization and aid quicker deployment of new users. IBM Systems Solutions for Branch Banking and IBM Virtualized Hosted Client Infrastructure will be delivered by IBM Global Services and select IBM Business Partners.

This is the second solution IBM has announced for the VCI, which has only been out for a few weeks. While some may at first glance see this offering as little more than a bundle of software on a BladeCenter, the reality is much more. The essence of VCI that is intriguing to us is the virtualized through-and-through message of the solution and its focus on leverage and flexibility. Bringing many applications to a centralized server location has inherent advantages in image control and other software updating concerns, but this combined with the flexibility of resources offered by VMware in conjunction with the scale-out nature of BladeCenter creates a compelling dynamically responsive platform on the backend without requiring specific form factors on the access side. Additionally, the value delivered by Citrix and ClearCube technologies bolsters the flexibility, efficiency, and manageability of the solution. This consolidation approach does not mandate replacement of any access infrastructure, works with either thick or thin clients, and works locally or remotely. Thus, a consistent user experience is much more likely and is granted across a variety of access methods all with reduced operational headaches.

Although there are many advantages of this solution, what excites us the most about this approach is how it is very difficult from other backend centralization solutions for PCs, such as the HP CCI. IBM VCI seeks to deliver the maximum utilization of resources to the largest audience of users. Each user access is virtualized, as is the storage, and the CPU on the blade on which applications are executing. Taken within the BladeCenter context, this offers a collection of resources made available to users in a dynamically allocated, yet highly efficient undertaking. This is in sharp contrast to the HP CCI approach which still maintains a one-on-one correlation between the user and the CPU, local hard drive, and blade resources. Such a solution may allow for fewer PCs to be deployed, but does not seek to maximize the utility of resource, and hence maintains a high overhead of underutilized resources as the demands and deployments scale. At the risk of sounding a broken refrain, for most solutions the approach taken by VCI offers greater consolidation, efficiency, and hence long-term savings, than that offered by CCI.

Virtualization through and through: it's where things are going and what we believe will prove to be the most disruptive and compelling IT achievement of the early 21st century.

IBM Achieves Collation of IT

By Joyce Tompsett Becknell

This week IBM purchased Collation, a company that does detailed mapping of automatically captured information about IT resources. The product is integrated into IBM's Tivoli systems management software, specifically within Tivoli Change and Configuration Management Database (CCMDB), and will help customers to understand the effect of changes to an IT environment. Collation helps users with the interrelationships between devices and systems, so that users can model change scenarios to see what the results — intended and unintended — might be. It provides a view of run-time dependencies across application, system, storage, and network tiers, and supports

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virtualized environments. The CCMDB is a service management platform that provides a single view across multiple sources of IT information. IBM believes that the acquisition strengthens its service management software portfolio and expands management automation and simplification capabilities. IBM also believes that with the Collation product, IT professionals can see how technology supports business processes, such as order entry, supply chain, and enterprise resource management.

IBM argues that 80% of business service-related failures are due to IT changes that had unpredicted impacts. Currently IT managers must manually map the interdependencies and order of relations of their IT applications, which takes significant time and resource. Most management currently looks at each system independently of the others. This provides a less-than-holistic view of how IT functions and means that identifying problems takes longer as sometimes the apparent problem is really a symptom of an underlying problem elsewhere in the system. With the addition of Collation, Tivoli is able to map the relationships and make immediate changes as the infrastructure is altered. That capability should give managers better accuracy and quicker turnaround on problem-solving. It should also help them to make better decisions about how, when, and where to make changes within their infrastructure.

IBM like most R&D-based IT vendors has been all about building mousetraps. But IBM lately has been about building mousetraps that are not only better in some manner, but actually smarter. Almost everything that IBM does now is about making businesses reach their next level of On Demand, which has come to signify access to the information they need to make smart, rapid business decisions. Collation clearly fits that strategy. IBM had a previous agreement with Collation and had already integrated the product with Tivoli, but IBM claims customers strongly urged it to purchase the company. As the product becomes embedded into Tivoli, it will change the nature of how the CCMDB functions and each iteration should make the product smarter yet, giving the IT department the ability to respond quickly to the impact of proposed changes, and confidently able to propose changes that might have positive impact. Tivoli customers that don't already use Collation have a new tool in the toolbox that they should work on adopting as soon as possible.

Sony to World: Whoops!

By Jim Balderston

Sony BMG music announced this week that it will be pulling its copy-protected CDs and will offer consumers the option of trading them in for versions that do not contain the XCP anti-piracy software code. That code, according to researchers, utilized a rootkit as a central element, by which it installed software on the user's computer without user knowledge. Security researchers argued that Sony's protection code created vulnerabilities in a user's system that could be taken advantage of by malicious hackers. Sony has said it will stop producing any more CDs with this particular feature included. Sony had released a patch for the problem as an initial response, but many consumers found it created even more problems than the original code.

It has been quite clear for some time now that the recording industry has no real idea of how to respond to the fundamental changes that are occurring as a result of the Internet and its related personal music devices. Consumers have greater flexibility than ever before to customize their personal soundtracks in an easy and painless fashion. The music industry still clings to older distribution models and has won significant legal victories against those who would impose a new world music order, as it were. Yes, the RIAA has been able to shut down music-sharing sites, but they have yet to address the prominent notion that consumers' demands and expectations on how music is delivered and accessed has changed forever. No amount of litigation or legislation will change that key fact. How the music industry responds to this sea change will in large part determine its future viability.

Let us stipulate that the XCP anti-piracy technology was and is not the way to respond. Sony violated a cardinal rule in bits distribution: don't surreptitiously download potentially (or actually) harmful code on a user's machine. Not only does this violate a basic assumption of trust by the user that they will get what they pay for and nothing more — no viruses, no worms, no adware, no malware — it also is foolhardy in the extreme given the realities of the Internet. Sony executives may have assumed, rightly in all probability, that 95% of the users that had XCP installed on their computers might never have noticed because they are largely computer novices. But to assume

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that the other 5%, more knowledgeable and technically sophisticated, would somehow ignore such a gross violation of the implied trust relationship is just another indication that the recording industry is still rather clueless about the true state of affairs out in the Ether. Sony's apparent judgment that not only would this 5% not discover or care about such an intrusion, or that they would not publicize it via the Internet, is a gross miscalculation of how the music industry is perceived by a significant portion of music aficionados and their expectations concerning purchased bits. Hopefully somewhere in Sony's management a lonely soul warned executives that XCP would be a really bad idea. And hopefully that person wasn't summarily fired. And hopefully that person may be allowed to participate in the discussions for Sony's next efforts to manage its content in the Internet age. We suppose that's the best that could be hoped for.

ICANN... Yes You Can!

By Joyce Tompsett Becknell and Susan Dietz

This week at the World Summit of the Information Society (WSIS) meeting in Tunisia, the U.S. got to retain control of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), an internationally organized, non-profit corporation that has responsibility for IP address space allocation protocol identifier assignment, generic and country code Top-Level Domains (ccTLD) name system management, and root server system management functions. Once upon a time, these services were provided by the U.S. government, but not anymore. According to ICANN, they are dedicated to preserving the operational stability of the Internet, promoting competition, achieving broad representation of global Internet communities, and developing policy appropriate to its mission through bottom-up, consensus-based processes. Before this meeting, the EU in particular had wanted the U.S. to cede sole control and create some sort of public-private partnership for better management of the Internet; however, the status quo has been upheld. As an olive branch of sorts, the U.S. did agree to the formation of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), which is designed for multi-stakeholder policy dialogue, but this time under the auspices of the UN Secretary General.

The media likes to tout headlines about the US "controlling" the Internet, as though the Internet were one entity that can be controlled. In some sense, they are correct but only insofar as control means managing the root addressing and managing servers of the Internet. Many countries in particular feel they want more control over what they do with their ccTLD which is much more a story of politics than of root control. After all, how can there be a system if everyone is doing their own thing? Anarchy only works up to a point. ICANN is participating at WSIS, and takes pains to point out that although it are a U.S.-based NGO, it are open to other parties. And let's face it, the reason the U.S. government gave control to ICANN was that they realized that they as a government weren't the best lot to manage this mess. Government of any stripe is not usually a leader in technology and practical day-to-day management. By definition everything in a government is political, whereas management of the technical aspects of the Internet should ideally be non-politicized. That of course isn't likely in a world populated by human beings, but the last group most of us want controlling our Internet is a pack of governments. Trust us, some of us have been living in the EU. And ICANN has no authority over issues like rules for financial transactions, content control, spam, or data protection. Those things are absolutely the sort of thing governments should decide together; but again, the Americans don't own "control" of any of that. Not that anyone is paying any attention.

Now on matters technical, there actually is an interesting point that could be made, although it doesn't seem that many are expressly stating it as such. ICANN coordinates the management of the technical elements of the DNS to ensure universal resolvability. That means that no matter where you are, when you type in your favorite Web address, it sends you to the right place. (As a reminder, DNS is the system that allows us to use www.something.ending (letters and words) rather than some IP address (123.1.12.23) (strings of numbers). The issue of course is that everything is done in a Latin alphabet now, which is fine if you use English or any of the many languages based on the Latin alphabet. However, if you use another alphabet — or worse yet have a language without an alphabet — well then, things can get entertaining. Longer term, as other language populations grow their Internet presence, there may come a time when either everyone uses Latin naming at the server level and finds a workaround, or we'll have to come up with a system that recognizes a larger group of

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characters. Now that's worth discussing, and a good reason to have international participation. In the meantime, if people want to fight about suffixes, then let them do it. We think that $100 laptops for the world's poorest children is an idea that merits much more of governments' time and energy than control of domain naming conventions. Next thing you know they'll want to regionalize the names in the periodic table of the elements.

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