
Market Roundup

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BuildForge

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Rational Development as IBM Acquires BuildForge

By *Tony Lock*

IBM has announced it has acquired BuildForge Inc., a privately held software company based in Texas. As is now the rule for such acquisitions, no financial details of the deal were revealed. BuildForge specializes in software tools that help automate the build-and-release processes associated with application development and delivery. In addition to accelerating software build-and-release cycles, the combination of the tools of BuildForge and IBM's Rational Software Division will help automate, audit, and document the software development process thereby greatly enhancing the governance of the software production process. The transaction will see around forty members of staff transfer to IBM in addition to the technology itself. The main software tools involved in the acquisition are BuildForge FullControl, which is used to manage and control builds and releases during the software development cycle; BuildForge FullThrottle, a build accelerator to execute processes concurrently across server pools; BuildForge Prism, a workstation IDE client providing developer self-service capabilities; and BuildForge Adaptors, a range of tools to integrate BuildForge products with a wide variety of third-party change and configuration management tools. IBM plans initially to make the BuildForge tools available without any change while it decides on how to market the tools in the longer term and to evaluate the potential for further product integration.

IBM has invested considerable time and effort over the course of the last three years since its acquisition of Rational enhancing and expanding its application/software development solutions. For the many organizations that develop software systems or applications the necessity to create and release software on shorter time scales grows ever stronger. At the same time, businesses are under greater pressure than at any time in their history to demonstrate that all facets of their operations, including software development, work in strict accord with an expanding battery of regulatory and compliance requirements. It goes without saying that it is now expected that all code released into use be of exceptionally high quality while the associated production costs must, of course, be minimized.

The combination of BuildForge components and IBM's Rational systems will create a software development package that could attract a variety of potential users. While IBM Rational is a platform deployed very widely around the world, BuildForge has a relatively small, though high-quality, customer base, the majority of it located in North America. Making BuildForge available via IBM's extensive sales and partner channels clearly holds great potential to expand usage of the tools and there is likely to be great interest, especially in the areas where governance and regulatory management are important, i.e., most places. Equally Rational's customers should find BuildForge straight forward to utilize as a large proportion of the existing customer base of BuildForge make use of the IBM technology. However, IBM will need to take some effort into marketing BuildForge in Europe and further afield.

Sun Announces Its Latest NAS Solution

By *Clay Ryder*

Sun Microsystems has announced the Sun StorageTek 5320 NAS Appliance, the first NAS solution based on the AMD Opteron processor model 252. The Sun StorageTek 5320 NAS Appliance builds on the Sun StorEdge 5000 NAS Appliance family, and also delivers investment protection via a data-in-place upgrade. Key features include

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iSCSI support, Microsoft Windows Hardware certified for Windows and Exchange environments; Gateway Support, for the midrange Sun StorEdge 6130 and 6920 systems and Sun's high-end disk portfolio, as well as Sun's FlexLine systems; Integrated realtime file system data protection against computer viruses certified with multiple scanning engines including Symantec AntiVirus Scan Engine; Compliance Archiving Software Option that stores and protects information and provides WORM functionality; and Sun's StorEdge Compliance Archiving System, a combination of Sun NAS technology with Sun StorEdge Compliance Archiving software, providing authenticity, integrity, ready access, and security supporting regulations including SEC 240, 17a-4. In addition, Sun NAS solutions with enterprise content management software and email archiving solutions allow companies to automate eDiscovery searches, providing audit logs and identity information, and ensuring rapid retrieval in the event of litigation. Sun reiterated its Installation, Configuration, Integration, Data Migration, Operations Migration, Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery services that aim to assist customers optimize and manage the performance of Sun NAS appliances. The company also expanded its Try and Buy Program to include storage products, which now allows customers and resellers to evaluate and test a Sun StorageTek 5320 NAS Appliance at no charge for sixty days, with the option to purchase the system at the end. The Sun StorageTek 5320 NAS appliance is available now through Sun and its reseller partners, starting at \$49,990 (U.S. list) for a 2.0TB system.

There has been a lot of news about Sun recently, much of it focused on the changing of the guard at the top. However, there have been other activities as well. With this offering, we see Sun continue to build its momentum with respect to storage and seeking to bring to market value that would address customers of many stripes. In particular, the antiviral and Windows-friendly focus of the product will likely appeal to SMBs or departmental organizations that have strategic commitments to the Windows environment but also would like to take advantage of the relative simplicity of the NAS value proposition. At the same time, the compliance option combined with ECM and archival initiatives could bring a level of governance/discipline for organizations who might not have legal reporting requirements, but would benefit from an enhanced approach to information storage that in many past scenarios may have required investments beyond the reach of some.

While we believe 5320 will appeal to various segments of the marketplace, at a higher level we are pleased to see much of the discussion around the product focused not on hardware but rather on software-driven abilities. Perhaps one of Sun's best kept secrets is that it is a software company too, and the company has a history of adding software value to solutions. With the recent coronation of Jonathan Schwartz as Sun's CEO, we are hopeful that the company will be more consistent and perhaps even more strident in its endorsement of its software abilities. This is not a call for more bashing of software costs in the marketplace a la McNealy, but rather the recognition of the $1 + 1 = 3$ value proposition of IT solutions that holistically consider hardware, software, services, and financing in total. Sun has tended to do well when it can rewrite the rules of the marketplace; some of its more novel approaches to financing are reflective of this. This solutions or systems approach is increasingly where we see the market going, and systems vendors such as Sun have an inherent advantage in this approach. Time will tell how well the market responds to the 5320, but we are nevertheless heartened by this announcement and look forward to see how Sun responds to the market under the tutelage of its new software savvy CEO.

UGS and Microsoft Team Up

By *Susan Dietz*

Microsoft and UGS Corporation recently announced a partnership between their two software packages aimed especially at benefiting the manufacturing segment. A variation of UGS's Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) software will now be offered on a Microsoft platform. The full solution is envisioned as a way in which manufacturers would have the ability to create and manage all their product data in a single environment, while allowing global team members, customers, industry partners, and vendors to have access to the company-wide system. The goal is that companies and their partners be able to be more innovative, and to drive profitability by getting products to market faster. The Microsoft packages used by the merger are Microsoft .NET, Visual Studio 2005, ASP.NET 2.0, Windows Server 2003 and Microsoft SQL Server 2005. The software packages utilized by

UGS Corporation are both Teamcenter software and UGS Velocity Series portfolio. Price point is not mentioned, but is most likely driven by the amount of service contracted and the extent of the software's use.

It's a delicate balance in any corporation to enforce a high level of security and enable people's access to information at the same time. That balance becomes even more precarious when industry partners and vendors are included in the software access. So here we come around again to the industry buzzword of the year, compliance. We are not convinced that the PLM software enabled on the Microsoft platform would be secure enough without extra measures taken, which means adding another layer of complexity onto the system, increasing potential headaches exponentially. We could be wrong, but we haven't seen much in the literature beyond the usual vague "yeah yeah yeah" security assurances. It seems that companies have a hard enough time enforcing compliance within their own borders; adding in other companies with people who have little to zero loyalty to another business may just prove to be detrimental.

UGS using a Microsoft platform, however, seems to be a pretty smart positioning move. Microsoft is an internationally recognized and used operating system, so any software that can successfully piggyback probably stands a good chance of being adopted more widely than otherwise. Nevertheless, there could be drawbacks to being associated with Microsoft. Recent legislation issues in Europe and Japan have taken a bit of the shine off of Microsoft's image, perhaps with a resultant slight tarnishing of any partners, particularly in the countries in question. This could, of course, result in fewer sales. However, Microsoft has bounced back before and will likely bounce back again, bringing along others for the roller coaster-like ride.