
Market Roundup

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CA Adds MDB to Unicenter

By Joyce Tompsett Becknell

CA has announced its latest release of Unicenter Network and Systems Management (Unicenter NSM) that offers a management database (MDB) built on Microsoft SQL Server and that should ease integration with CA and third-party management solutions. Unicenter NSM r11.1 integrates with other CA solutions that use the MDB including CA's Service Management, IT Asset Management, and Desktop and Server Management solution areas. It also interoperates with CA solutions such as SPECTRUM and eHealth, and it integrates with third-party management products, including Microsoft Operations Manager, HP OpenView, Cisco Works, and Citrix Presentation Server. Unicenter NSM r11.1 provides continuous discovery across the IT environment and it also incorporates solutions into the core product that were previously offered as add-ons, including Active Directory Management Option, Systems Performance Option, Monitoring Option for z/OS, and Management Portal.

CA believes that by providing a common repository for management data across the enterprise, Unicenter can accelerate problem identification and resolution, improve decision-making, and improve efficiency of core IT operations. This is because large companies—the primary users of Unicenter—have complex IT environments. The complexity here lies in the numerous identities in the architecture and their interdependencies on each other. In order to have a firm grip on how resources are being used, where trouble spots lie, and how to best deploy available resources at any given point in time, it is necessary to have a repository for all the data. This is the next threshold that management vendors are trying to reach with their products, and incorporating a database to manage this information is the next step. Since most large IT departments have staff deployed on specific projects or technologies, it is imperative that there are systems that can measure the bigger picture to understand how individual actions have an impact on the larger environment. This is not a simple undertaking, though CA has significant automation built in and claims that it and its partners offer a wide range of services to help existing customers upgrade to the new Unicenter or to help new customers get started.

After suffering management changes, accounting scandals, and several acquisitions, CA has spent the last year righting its operations, moving its products forward, and laying the groundwork for recapturing thought leadership in this hot space. This announcement is the next step as CA slowly but surely reveals the evolution of Unicenter to incorporate important technologies such as the MDB. The installed base should be able to see the future now as it applies to their environment, and potential customers will be able to see how Unicenter competes with products such as Tivoli. With this righting of its corporate rudder, we believe that Unicenter is definitely worth a second look.

Proofpoint Plus VMware Equals Messaging Security Virtual Appliance

By Tony Lock

This week Proofpoint, Inc. released the Proofpoint Messaging Security Gateway Virtual Edition, an enterprise-scale virtual appliance that provides messaging security. The new solution utilizes VMware's virtual appliance technology to allow simple deployment to provision new Proofpoint Virtual appliances very quickly in response to fluctuating demands. The Proofpoint Messaging Security Gateway Virtual Edition will run on any standard x86

desktop or server using VMware Player, VMware Workstation, VMware Server, or VMware Infrastructure. The pre-configured enterprise messaging security application, message transfer agent, and secure operating environment is currently in Beta trial and is expected to be generally available in Q4 2006. The software is priced on a per-module, annual license fee based on the number of mailboxes protected. Proofpoint modules for anti-spam, antivirus, content security, and secure messaging are priced separately. Support and maintenance are included in the cost of annual licenses. Any number of virtual appliance instances can be deployed for redundancy and scalability without penalty. Sample pricing indicates that a solution using the Anti-Spam, AntiVirus, and Content Compliance modules would have a list price around \$10,000 a year for 250 users. As the virtualization market matures, Proofpoint has stated that it intends to introduce versions of its virtual appliance for additional virtualization environments. A trial version of the Proofpoint Messaging Security Gateway Virtual Edition is available for download and can be installed and run on any x86 desktop or server hardware using VMware's free software.

For both Proofpoint and VMware this is a very interesting development. Proofpoint is well established as a supplier of security and privacy solutions to large enterprises but has traditionally deployed its offerings as physical appliances built not only to handle the security functionality but capable of dealing with very high volumes of traffic very effectively and at high speed. Providing its functionality in a virtual appliance that could, in theory, run on any x86 platform supported by VMware is a major vote of confidence for VMware and will add significant new capabilities to its Virtual Appliance capabilities. However, Proofpoint, and to a lesser degree VMware, will need to ensure that potential customers select appropriate physical hardware and manage the virtual appliances well in order to ensure that performance bottlenecks have no chance to make themselves felt.

VMware's Virtual Appliance strategy has much going for it as organizations seek to become more responsive to potentially wildly fluctuating demands for IT service. The Proofpoint development should add more variety and quality to the offerings already available. However, we believe that VMware needs to market its Virtual Appliance technology more aggressively and needs to educate potential customers and its many channel partners on where the solution makes sense.

IBM Announces Cell-Based Blade

By Clay Ryder

IBM has announced its first computing solution based on the Cell Broadband Engine (Cell BE), namely the IBM BladeCenter QS20. This solution targets computationally intense workloads such as 3D animation rendering, compression, encryption, and seismic and medical imaging, to help companies create and operate highly visual, immersive, realtime applications. Based on the Power Architecture, the Cell BE was originally developed by IBM, Sony, and Toshiba for use in gaming consoles. Its multi-core architecture and high-speed communications offer improved, realtime response by incorporating IBM's advanced multi-processing technologies generally found only in the company's most sophisticated server offerings. IBM stated it believes that the QS20 will expand the use of Cell into industries such as medical imaging, aerospace, defense, digital animation, communications, and oil and gas. Some specific applications mentioned include comparison and mapping of 3D medical images, which are typically taken over months or years; signal processing and radar enhancements for the aerospace industry; and improved seismic imaging for energy companies engaged in locating and drilling for oil. The IBM BladeCenter QS20's incorporation of the Cell BE follows last year's collaboration with Mercury Computer Systems that sought to enable Mercury to build Cell BE-based solutions targeted at multiple industries. IBM indicated that it will also continue to work with the broader community through Blade.org, Power.org and open standards to bring additional Cell BE-based solutions to market. The IBM BladeCenter QS20 based on Cell BE will be delivered through the IBM System Cluster 1350, which offers a variety of server, processor, and switching technology options. Pricing details were not announced.

It's interesting to watch the circuitous route that technology often takes. Capabilities that were once considered only in the context of the extreme high end of the server marketplace can now be found in some of the most common of consumer electronics. The enormous computation and graphically intense capability of the Cell BE is just one example of this. Although games are fun and cool, especially if one needs an excuse to put off doing

something more important, the highly computational nature of graphics and movement integration found in common sub-\$200 gaming consoles represents an oft-underappreciated deployment of technical innovation. Beyond the thrill of 3D off-road dirt biking or intergalactic battles with the green men from Mars, the sheer power enabled by the computational engines in these consoles is amazing. When considering more mundane, but ultimately far more lucrative applications, harnessing this expertise to create highly sophisticated realtime computing and imaging systems for industries as varied as medical imaging, seismology, and radar, among others, is a natural outgrowth of what are otherwise cool consumer electronics. This counters conventional wisdom that associates high performance with massive expenditure, but then again conventional wisdom, by definition, does not dictate the path of innovation either.

The Cell BE is yet another reminder of the value of investment and innovation in chip design. There are few companies remaining on the planet that take this course of action seriously, yet this is one of the places where a vendor can quite legitimately create competitive advantage and drive the creation of new markets, or at least new market opportunities. The scope of the Power architecture is considerable, when one stops to consider that devices from automotive control systems to game consoles, laptops to workstations, and all the way up to massive-scale super-computing solutions all come from this venerable processor architecture. By incorporating Cell BE into the BladeCenter, IBM has created additional flexibility for those who typically seek scale-out solutions for their computing needs. The Cell BE and its Power architecture combined with the inherent simplicity of blade-based solutions offers a highly flexible, simplified, and consolidated computing platform for graphics/imaging intensive applications. To our way of thinking, this is just one more reflection of the value and importance of R&D and innovation.

Numara Acquires UniPress

By Joyce Tompsett Becknell

Numara Software, a provider of service desk software, has purchased UniPress Software, the developer of FootPrints, a web-based service desk software solution. The solution gives the combined company a strong foothold in the small and mid-market service desk sector, with a combined installed base of nearly 50,000 organizations. According to Numara, FootPrints provides mid-market customers more mature help desk and customer support capabilities, including more functionality, flexibility, and scalability. FootPrints is 100% web-based and includes incident, problem, and request tracking; change management; service level management; email management; dynamic access to LDAP and SQL directories; sales automation; and telephony integration. Numara will continue to develop both flagship products separately and retain the brand names as the needs of each customer segment are distinct. The company indicated that both products will continue to focus on their ease-of-use, price-to-feature value, rapid installation, ease of installation and customization, and flexibility. UniPress offices will be retained.

Most mid-market companies are struggling with IT complexity as much as their larger counterparts, but the degree and scale are such that large company solutions are usually too much for the mid-market customer. While there are many solutions for mid-market companies, the solutions are generally local and the market is fragmented. Consolidation is mostly inevitable, so M&A activity will continue in this market. FootPrints customers should see a benefit from Numara's greater financial resources, which helps guarantee product evolution and development focus. It can result in more localized support, and more services offerings. For Numara it means acquiring a web-based product that meets the needs of a more sophisticated environment and gives growing customers more options. FootPrints also provides ITIL (IT infrastructure library) compatibility, which is an important new set of features for customers.

Mid-market companies struggling with asset management, software and patch deployment, and network monitoring may find a new alternative with the combined Numara and UniPress. The main challenge for this company, as it is for so many small companies, is that it has its largest base in the U.S. and has made forays into Europe predictably through the UK. In order to really grow, the company will have to expand to other markets and balance that investment with its revenue. It is a nice problem to have.