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HP boosts the entry of SDN

By Jeffrey Burt
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Hewlett-Packard, which is the world's second largest manufacturer of networking products, makes a forced throw into the area of software-configurable network (software-defined networking, SDN), which now become the busiest place of the market.

After the initial mention SDN HP officials in February this year, the company added the support for the protocol OpenFlow (today it is the key element SDN) 16 models of its switches, including products from the HP 3500, 5400 and 8200. By the end of the year will support all OpenFlow switches in the network architecture HP FlexNetwork.

In early October, the IT giant has introduced its strategy of active market development SDN, including not only the addition of support for OpenFlow to more network switches, but also produce a number of other products and services, which officials said HP, will provide companies SDN-based solutions open standards, covering all levels of the infrastructure and the controlling software to the application layer in the presence of a single control center.

HP to a breadth of its offerings is the main difference between the fast-growing segment of the market, where there are not only such eminent supplier of network solutions like Cisco Systems and Juniper Networks, and many start-ups and try to stake out a place where other famous IT companies, such as virtualization giant VMware.

"In the era of cloud customers want to have a single point of control across the network, allowing for a few minutes as you need to deploy an application or service users - said Bethany Mayer, senior vice president and general manager of HP Networking. - Only HP has to offer a complete solution software-configurable network that automates the task of manual configuration of equipment, software and applications from the data center to the level of a PC through a single point of management. "

SDN idea essentially is to pass on for many tasks of network management, which is still carried out with the individual devices that make up the park expensive network equipment. This approach moves the intelligence of the network, for example the transfer of traffic with minimal delays and to ensure its security on the switches and routers at the software controllers. According to industry observers, SDN - a natural step in the growing virtualization of data centers, which now has become common server virtualization and storage virtualization is implemented. Transferring a similar trend on the net - part of the evolution of data centers.

This work has already joined Cisco, Juniper, Extreme Networks, and other well-known manufacturers. And for smaller vendors and startups, such as Big Switch Networks, Vyatta or Adara, software-configurable network becomes the main business. The game turned on and companies like VMware (last in July announced the purchase SDN-startup Nicira for 1.26 billion dollars), the functions considered SDN as a potential component of their larger infrastructure solutions.

HP today expanded its ambitions in SDN as part of its initiative Virtual Application Networks. The company introduces support OpenFlow the nine new switches FlexNetwork, including a new series of HP 3800. In addition, HP is developing its own controller Virtual Application Networks SDN transferring intelligence network equipment to the level of the software. Thanks to the new controller will be organizing a centralized view network and the ability to automate the configuration of devices in the infrastructure, which had often done manually via CLI. According to HP, the controller will increase the flexibility and scalability of networks. And with the third-party API, developers can create enterprise applications for networks.

Among the software created by HP for the controller, a new product Sentinel Security, automating network access control and intrusion prevention features for campus networks, equipped with switches to support OpenFlow. According to HP, these opportunities will not only save money on network equipment for such media, but also greatly help organizations to control security, as more users connect to the network at my workplace own smart phones, tablets and other devices. HP also creates new software Virtual Cloud Networks, which enables cloud providers to offer a more automated and scalable public cloud services for organizations. With these services, companies can create isolated virtual cloud network in public clouds.

Along with this group of HP Technology Services is preparing a range of services designed to help companies to explore opportunities, design and deployment of SDN-networks.

According to Network World blog ZK Research principal analyst Zeus Kerravala, well that HP so vigorously promoted in the area SDN, where there are already competitors such as Cisco and Juniper. HP service capabilities significantly distinguish it from manufacturers such as Cisco, which helps companies design, deploy and manage SDN mainly through its strong partner channels.

But analysts do not quite understand why HP has decided to develop its own SDN-controller, since it seems reasonable to take the support of a wide range of controllers already on the market.

"How to create your controller would be better to support HP has established a maximum number of ready-made products. - Writes Kerravala. - But, as I said above, SDN-game battles are stacks and HP prefers to build its final stack. Whether on-site HP Cisco, it might have been the right approach, but HP has taken the second place in the network market is mainly due to edge switches, while remaining a minority player in the network of data centers. A better approach would be for HP interoperability on that from the beginning focused products ProCurve ".

Some of the new proposals will be published in HP until next year. Although switches support OpenFlow and software Sentinel Security already delivered to customers, the controller and Virtual Cloud Networks Application will only be ready in the second half of 2013 their services HP will put in place since the beginning of 2013

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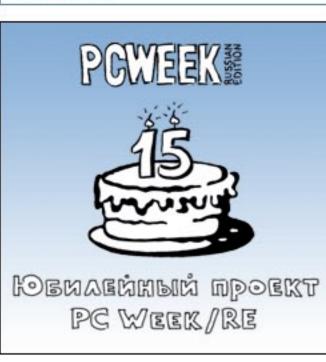RVC as a development institution: basic concepts

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