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eWEEKChat Aug. 13: Virtual Data Centers: Wave of the Future?

By Chris Preimesberger | Posted 2014-08-12   ✉ Email   🖶 Print

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The data center is fast becoming the computer. Let's chat about the implications Wednesday in the monthly eWEEKchat.

On Wednesday, Aug. 13, at 11 a.m. PST/2 p.m. EST/7 p.m. GMT, @eWEEKnews will host its 23rd eWEEKChat event. The topic will be "Virtualizing Entire Data Centers: Wave of the Future?" It will be moderated by Chris Preimesberger, who serves as *eWEEK's* editor of features and analysis.

Some quick facts:

Topic: "Virtualizing Entire Data Centers: Wave of the Future?"
Date/time: Aug. 13, 2014 @11a.m. PST/2 p.m. EST/7 p.m. GMT
Hosted by: @eWeekNews
Moderator: Chris Preimesberger: @editingwhiz
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The data center is fast becoming the computer. For the past couple of years, IT decision-makers have been upgrading their legacy server rooms to software-defined data centers, which utilize virtualization and cloud services--not just physical servers, networking and storage--at their cores to get workloads done faster and more efficiently. This is indicative of automation at work in just about every corner of these powerful enterprise nerve centers.

For the last three or four years, we've seen the fast adoption of software-defined networking, which is all about new intelligence inside routers, controllers, and switches and the automation of how and where--and how fast--data flows from node to node. This all enhances the speed at which virtualized machines run.

Virtualization and automation has spread to other parts of the IT system, namely in terms of software-defined storage, software-defined servers, software-defined security--even software-defined I/O--first brought to market by Xsigo (acquired by Oracle in 2012) in 2006.

Software-defined everything now is coming into play: servers, networking, storage and now data centers. This is merely a marketing term, but it also is indicative of the clear trend toward centralized control in new-generation data centers.

IDC analysts said SDN hardware/software/service revenues driven by sales to enterprises and cloud service providers reached about $360 million in 2013, and are expected to balloon to a whopping $3.7 billion by 2016. Those numbers includes sales of everything SDN-related, from the associated network infrastructure and applications to control plane solutions and professional services.

Established networking vendors such as Cisco Systems, Hewlett-Packard, Juniper Networks and Brocade Communications are deeply into the SDN trend, and a host of startups are bringing their solutions to market. At the same time, there has been some consolidation in the industry as larger players—including some with little or no presence in the data center networking space—have bought smaller vendors to augment their SDN capabilities. Those include Big Switch Networks, Adara and Pica8.

For example, VMware in 2012 spent $1.26 billion for SDN startup Nicira, and a week later, Oracle bought Xsigo for an unspecified amount of money. In November 2012, Brocade bolstered its SDN expertise by acquiring SDN startup Vyatta.

Talking points in Wednesday's eWEEKchat will include how your company is moving, or planning to move, to a virtualized data center; what network pain points SDN solves; and why all this automation is really the future of the industry.

Some questions we will use include:

--How much of your IT system is now running on virtual machines? Do you see this increasing?.

--Is virtualized and software-defined "everything" more of a marketing/positioning play than a real-world solution at this point? How much of an business advantage is this initiative in your mind?

--What are some differences you see between SDN and say, autonomic (self-healing, patching, maintaining) computing?

--If you are using software-defined networking, storage or servers, what issues did you encounter with utilizing legacy hardware?

--True or false: Not all enterprises will need high-end, virtualized IT architectures. However, companies that automate IT will eventually be the ones in the driver's seat.

Join us on Wednesday--it will be well worth your time.

Chris Preimesberger is Editor of Features & Analysis at eWEEK. Twitter: @editingwhiz

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