ROUNDSTONE SOLUTIONS

How far along are you in transforming your IT environment?

If you've been the IT business for any amount of time, you'd have to admit that the rate of change in our industry is accelerating. If you're standing still, you're falling behind. And no one wants to do that.

It's no longer enough to think of IT as a separate part of any company or public entity. IT has evolved into an important and integral part of the business, with a "seat at the table" in any strategic discussions. As a result, IT has gotten a lot more attention paid to it, not just because of the amount of money that gets spent on IT, but because executives now recognize the power that effectively deployed and managed IT can give their business, including a competitive edge.

Think about it; can you even imagine a bank without effective technology? An insurance company? Health care? Simply stated, IT has become ingrained in just about everything we do.

Which brings me to my point. As IT has become more important than ever before, are we using "old school" ways to acquire, implement, and manage IT? The answer is that for many, not much has changed.

IT is in the beginning of a transformative period. There are multiple ways of deploying IT, multiple ways to run IT, and multiple ways to manage it. To the largest degree possible, we should be looking at ways to automate things, because at its core, isn't that what IT was initially created to do?

As an IT infrastructure integration company, Roundstone Solutions has been in the middle of discussions about how to best implement IT these days. We're involved in conversations about which technologies provide revolutionary better performance, not just evolutionary improvements. We're talking with customers about which technologies offer the best road map into the future, which offer better costs structures, and which are best deployed elsewhere. One of the things that we've seen is that there is not one correct answer to any of these questions.

In order for IT to be as effective as it needs to be, the conversation doesn't start with technology, but rather the business objectives of the business. The technology part is "easy", but if it doesn't deliver the expected benefit for the business, then the effort will have been wasted.

As I stated earlier, we're in a transformational period. This requires that we be more informed and open to new things. It also means that some of your existing VARs, resellers, solutions providers, etc. may not be appropriate for you to continue to work with going forward. It's no longer about who's got the best price, but instead "who's got the best approach to helping our business be more successful". Believe me, there is a difference.

Give Roundstone Solutions a chance to show you that we're different. You'll be glad you did.

Give us a call at 925-217-1177 or email us at sales@roundstonesolutions.com for more details.

Application Acceleration…why wouldn't everyone want to have it?

In our opinion, every server that gets installed in an IT environment should include technology that allows for the ability to use 100% of the performance that you paid for.

What we're talking about here is the fact that many users go to great pains to virtualize to be able to utilize more of the server than previously, as well as to provide greater flexibility. Fair enough… that makes sense.

But have you really looked at what the utilization of each of the physical servers is in your environments? What you'll probably find is that you've done a great job of virtualizing, but you're not even close to using all of the available performance in your server. Stated differently, you're wasting money. And we don't know of any of our customers that deliberately try to waste money.

Your existing server vendors and software vendors make their money by selling you more of their products. They want to sell you more, more, more. Regarding servers, the less server capacity you need, the less servers you'll need to buy. And that's not good for the server vendor nor the software vendor. But it would be good for you, wouldn't it?

The technology exists for you to be able to get much higher utilization

from each of your existing and future servers. It's very simple, and has been around for many years.

It's Flash technology. No, not SSDs but rather a deployment of Flash directly on your CPU bus. This gives you performance at microsecond latency rather than millisecond latency.

Fusion-io is the leader in this space, and is the de facto standard. The deployment is simple; Roundstone Solutions and Fusion-io run what's called ioProfiler on your server to determine the characteristics of the workloads running on them. Based on the IO requirements, adding Flash to the environment could improve your performance by 10-40X!

Why the big improvement? Simple. The reason you're not getting full performance from your servers is that the servers are most likely waiting for the data that is needed to be worked on. You most likely have the data stored on a mechanical, spinning disk, behind a storage controller. Each IO request requires the CPU to wait until the data has arrived before it can compute. With Fusion-io Flash, frequently used data stays in Flash and latency is dramatically different.

The net result is that your applications run faster, more

effectively, and allow you to run more on each server. Which then reduces your requirement for more servers, and your costs go down.

Why wouldn't everyone want this?

Flash used to be very expensive, and many felt that it was only for those with very intensive compute environment. Not anymore. Flash has really come down in price, and can be used for any workload.

You can buy Fusion-io Flash cards from Roundstone Solutions or the major server vendors. Keep in mind that any card acquired from a specific server vendor will only work in that manufacturer's equipment, whereas a Fusion-io card from Roundstone Solutions can be used in different manufacturers' servers. This gives you longer useful life, and with it, additional cost savings.

Contact Roundstone Solutions and we'll help you take a look at Flash, and in particular, Fusion-io. We can be reached at (925) 217-1177 or sales@roundstonesolutions.com.

ROUNDSTONE SOLUTIONS

Fabric Networking furthers the automation of your IT environment

You know how easy it is to use Fibre Channel. You connect another switch into the fabric, and the others switches find it and merge it into the environment. It's done pretty much automatically, with little user intervention required.

Well, Brocade has the same for IP networking. Their VDX family of 10GB switches utilize a technology called VCS, which creates a network fabric for IP networking.

Think about the user intervention required to install a new Cisco switch into your environment. It takes over 100 steps to do so. With Brocade, it's 3-4 lines of code, using a CLI that looks very much like the Cisco CLI you're used to using.

We know you've been a long time customer of Cisco. There used to be no better alternatives. But there's a great, better alternative available now, and it's from Brocade.

Contact Roundstone Solutions at 925-217-1177 or sales@roundstonesolutions.com for more information.
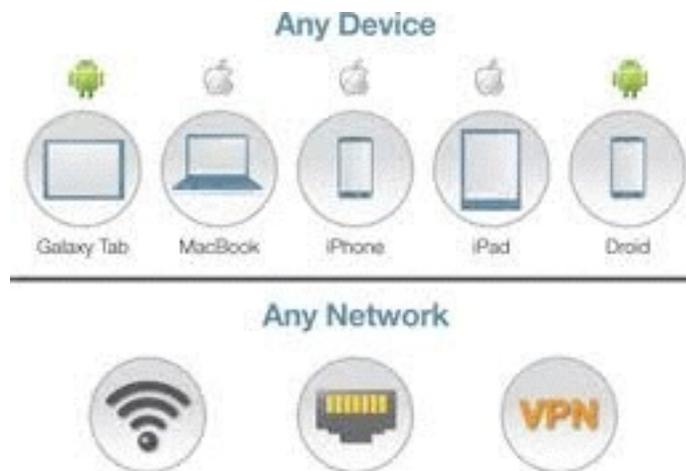

Aruba's Clearpass and Mobility

You're probably working on a BYOD/Mobility strategy for your business. It's a big challenge, making sure that those you want on your network can access what they need to, while keeping those you don't want on your network from accessing anything.

Aruba, which has been known as the standard for Wireless, has further defined their business to be all about mobility. Aruba offers a product called ClearPass which is superior to Cisco ISE and others.

Roundstone Solutions is a partner of Aruba, and we'd like to speak with you about your mobility strategy. Contact Roundstone Solutions at 925-217-1177 or sales@roundstonesolutions.com for more information.

Mobility with Aruba ClearPass

Paying too much for your backup storage?

We'll go out on a limb here and answer for you…probably.

It's not your fault. Unless you started your IT environment within the last two years, you probably have "traditional storage" and vendors installed, like EMC, NetApp, HDS, and HP. That's fine; they make great equipment and have been the leaders in the business for many years.

However, the ability for you to segment your storage is here. You no longer should keep all of your data on the same kind of storage, because the different types of data serve different purposes, and have different costs associated with them.

Take, for example, storage that is used for backup. By definition, backup storage is just that, backup. It's not expected to be utilized unless there is a problem with your primary storage. While critical, it's not as critical as your primary storage. So why pay "primary" storage costs for "backup" data? Doesn't make sense.

There are a number of vendors that offer cheap storage, and that's not what we're advocating here. We're talking about enterprise class, functional storage, that is very inexpensive.

Exablox is a new company founded by those who've been involved in many traditional storage vendors and startups alike. Exablox offers you the ability to pay very inexpensive prices for your backup data. Think $13K for 48TB. Software, replication, and support included. That got your attention?

At Roundstone Solutions, we think that your storage planning has to include more than a cursory look at different vendors. It should include tiering of storage, to give you a choice of device depending on the type of data. And, as important to the discussion, there should be different prices for the tiers.

Roundstone is also a partner of Fusion-io, which makes great Flash storage for high performance workloads and data. Just like we wouldn't recommend that all of your data needs to reside on Flash technology, not all of it has to reside on expensive storage, either.

Give us a call and we'll be happy to have a conversation about your storage needs and environment.

Contact Roundstone Solutions for help.

About Roundstone Solutions

Roundstone Solutions is an IT solutions provider, based in Northern California. Roundstone is focused on the data center environment for small, medium, and large enterprises. As more and more workloads move to the Cloud, we specialize in helping companies and public sector entities implement IT environments that are higher performing and lower cost than their previous environments.

Roundstone Solutions was founded by Tim Joyce, an industry veteran who has run similar companies for many years, always with an eye towards earning the highest level of customer satisfaction.

Roundstone Solutions can help you design, architecture, provision, install, implement, and manage your IT environment, either through our own staff, or through our strategic partners.

Please see more about Roundstone Solutions at www.roundstonesolutions.com
Our blog can be found at www.timjoyce-roundstonesolutions.blogspot.com

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