



Converged Infrastructure is the hottest topic in the market right now...here's a primer

The hottest topic in Information Technology right now are all forms of Converged Infrastructure. Depending on which vendor you hear this from, the definition will be a little different. Let us help level set:

Converged Infrastructure is a generic term for putting all 3 aspects of the hardware infrastructure (servers, storage, networking) into one rack. Most converged Infrastructure offerings are really "reference architectures" made up to look like one unit. The truth is that they are tightly coupled compilations of a few different manufacturers' equipment. For example, VCE sells the VBlock, which is a combination of VMware's hypervisor, EMC's storage, and Cisco's UCS servers and network switches.

Examples of traditional Converged Infrastructure are the aforementioned VBlock and Flex Pod (Cisco, VMware, and NetApp for NFS protocol customers).

There is a subset of the Converged Infrastructure discussion that is actually more than reference architectures, and are truly redesigned systems. These products are referred to as Hyper-Converged Infrastructure, or HCI for short. This is where you really want to take a look.

The most prevalent company in the HCI space is, by far, Nutanix. Nutanix is in the Gartner Magic Quadrant, and they have over 50% market share. What Nutanix has done is rewrite the file system,

with a couple of the founders having come from Google. The result is a system that is software defined, and combines commodity servers and storage hardware to produce very high marks from customers. Other companies in the HCI space are Simplivity, Pivot3, and a few others.

Because HCI is where all the action is, the traditional vendors have all come out with products recently, including HPE, EMC, and Cisco. Most of those offerings appear to be rushed to market, so the jury is out on them.

Overall, the HCI market is causing customers to look at their IT requirements as a series of workloads, that should be solved with platforms that are based on workloads. AN HCI solution should be scalable to a more granular degree than a traditional platform. Additionally, it should be much easier to use, have all of the required storage software included in the offering, and cost less.

Roundstone is a proud partner of Nutanix; we started working with Nutanix in 2014. We recognize them for disrupting the market, but it's important to note that their products work, and work well. Customers love them.

Roundstone is also a partner of Pivot3, Dell, HPE, and EMC, all of which are offering HCI alternatives. Please contact us so we can help you look at your IT infrastructure to see if HCI is a fit for you.

We send this email version of the Roundstone Solutions Quarterly Newsletter to over 20,000 contacts every quarter. We try to keep our lists current, and only wish to send it to those who will find it useful. If you're getting this newsletter and you like it, please let us know. If you're getting it and you don't wish to continue to receive it, let us know. We'll remove you from our mailing list right away. Thanks.

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Spotlight on our Vendor Partners

Our company, Roundstone Solutions, has been in business since 2012. In that time, we have chosen to partner with a select group of partners that deliver better outcomes for customers. We have tended to focus on companies that are providing “disruptive technologies”.

Here’s an update on what’s new with a few of them:

NUTANIX

Nutanix has continued to grow significantly. Their product, Xtreme Computing Platform, comes in many variants, depending on workload requirements.

Probably the best kept secret within Nutanix is their hypervisor, called Acropolis. Nutanix took the KVM product and customized it, to give it the systems management functionality that users like from VMware’s vCenter product. Performance using Acropolis is terrific, and users are raving about the improvements they are experiencing over VMware. The best part? There’s no charge for Acropolis. No license charge, and no support charge. It’s included with every Nutanix block.

So, when you’re doing your analysis on whether HCI from Nutanix makes sense, don’t forget that you can completely eliminate your VMware costs, too.

BROCADE AND RUCKUS

Brocade has just announced that they are acquiring Ruckus Wireless. Both Brocade and Ruckus are partners of Roundstone.

We think this combination makes perfect sense; Brocade is busy showing customers that their products are an excellent alternative to Cisco, and wireless was a hole in their product offering. Ruckus is the perfect choice, as they have been making huge inroads displacing Aruba and Cisco/Meraki installations.

We think that this announcement is excellent for their individual and joint customers.

RUBRIK

Rubrik is a recent addition to Roundstone’s preferred partner list. Rubrik makes a product that they refer to as Converged Data Management. The product automates all of the things that storage administrators hate relating to backup and restore, and uses the Hyper-Converged Infrastructure approach to deploy their software.

If you’re a customer of Commvault, EMC, HPE, Dell, and others, and your infrastructure is virtualized, you will definitely benefit from Rubrik. The benefits are ease of use, simplicity and agility, and lower cost than you’re currently paying.

We are very bullish on what the Rubrik product offers to our Clients.

NEXGEN STORAGE AND PIVOT3

NexGen Storage, which provides a very strong hybrid storage array, was acquired by Pivot3, one of the early pioneers in the HCI space. Both companies were in a position where they were growing, and had great acceptance of their products. Still, NexGen wanted to be able to participate in the HCI market, and Pivot3 needed a better storage story with their converged solutions. A great combination.

In addition, Pivot3 is one of the leading companies in the security space for public sector entities across the United State. Roundstone is pleased to represent both NexGen and now, the Pivot3 and NexGen combination.



Are you getting anything other than price from your VAR partner?

You know, we've been doing this long enough to have seen it all, at least twice. When we started at this, customers needed to see vendors and their partners, because that is how they would get information about solutions to their challenges. It's only been the last 10 years or so that manufacturers have placed much of their product and company data on their websites.

Our customers tell us that they do most of their research into solutions on their own, using information they find on the internet. A quick Google search can turn up just about all of the information you might need on a topic.

We do this, too, to learn about prospects, vendors, and issues that customers are facing which our solutions could possibly help solve.

But at the end of the day, your management doesn't measure you on whether you got help in your job. Wouldn't you want someone who knows what they're doing to validate what you're thinking the right solution to be for your business? Someone who meets with many companies, some like yours, and has some perspective on what alternatives there may be?

Of course you would.

Roundstone has always gone face-to-face with our Clients and Prospects. We think that it's very important we learn as much as we can about our

Client's infrastructure before we'd feel comfortable offering a solution to a problem. How could we possibly know the best advice to give if we give it in a vacuum? That's not us.

I know what you're thinking; surely working with a company that goes face-to-face is going to cost more than picking up the phone and calling CDW. Actually, it won't. In fact, I will bet you a dollar that our pricing will beat pricing you get from the places where you can place orders online or on the phone.

It's not going to cost you anything to get experienced help and advice. Why not take advantage of it, if for no other reason than to confirm you've got it all figured out? Free help...that's a pretty good price.

I am reminded of the adage that the sweet taste of low price disappears long before the sour taste of a bad purchase does. Something to think about. We want to help.

Roundstone is one of the most experienced and hands-on Solutions Providers/VARs in Northern CA. We know technology well, and we'd like to understand your environment and goals so we can help connect the dots.

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

What do you think of Vendor events?

Our business thrives when we gain new Clients, and to make that happen, we sometimes host events, both online and in-person. But lately, we're wondering if events are valuable for our Prospects. There seems to be a sort of "fatigue" with events. We get it; we also get invites to dozens each week.

We ask because we have had a few events where we'd had a great amount of folks register, but then the actual turnout was disappointing.

We put a lot of effort into creating events that will be of value and will be fun for our Prospects and Clients. We're asking because we're wondering if you value events anymore? Very few people seem to have time, or make time, to get education in their jobs, so perhaps we should focus our efforts in a different direction than events.

What you you say?



New Roundstone Partnerships for 2016

One thing about Information Technology is that it never stands still. New companies come into being regularly, and some are the kind we want to partner with, and you want to do business with.

So far in 2016, Roundstone has entered into partnerships agreements with the following companies:

- Rubrik, offering Converged Data Management
- Qumulo, offering high performance Software Defined Storage
- Faction, offering Cloud hosting
- eFolder, offering data storage in the Cloud
- Ring Central, offering hosted VoIP solutions

New year, new logo, new website (coming)

We've been in business since 2012, and we felt it was time to refresh our marketing "look and feel". So, we've engaged a branding expert to redo things. Already, we have a new logo, and are working hard to launch our updated, more mobile-friendly Website.

Josh Barton, of Alchemy Designs, is helping us with the new website. The new look will be cleaner, with bolder colors and will be easy to read and understand. We're going to take a lot of information out of the site, since users like sites that are easy to get info from so they can decide if they want to connect further.

Look for the new Roundstone website to launch in late April or early May. And then call us at (925) 217-1177 so that we can help you update your IT infrastructure so that it's a Next Generation Datacenter.

About Roundstone Solutions

Roundstone Solutions is an IT solutions provider and systems integrator based in Northern California. We are very active helping End-User Clients transform their IT infrastructure through the use of newer technologies as well as Cloud deployments. The end result are much higher performing, lower cost, enabling infrastructures.

Roundstone Solutions was founded in 2012 and continues to grow. Our relentless focus is to be the Northern CA VAR/Reseller with the highest level of customer satisfaction. We accomplish this by understanding our customers' business objectives, and then matching the appropriate technology solutions to get the job done right.

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

We look forward to helping you transform to a Next Generation IT infrastructure!

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