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Hyper-Converged Infrastructure continues to be the hottest platform in the market

As it has been for the past year, Hyper-Converged Infrastructure (HCI) is the hottest platform in the business. There is good reason for this; End-Users that have deployed this platform are reporting better than expected experiences with the platform.

The leader in this space continues to be Nutanix, and Roundstone is a proud partner of Nutanix. At Nutanix's .NEXT user conference in June, there were a number of announcements that make the Nutanix platform one that can run every application that your business has. No longer is deployment limited to virtualized environments; you can now use Nutanix for bare-metal deployments, containers, and all types of virtualization.

By using HCI, you can eliminate your need for a SAN, and by getting rid of the SAN, you simplify your environment. HCI will replace your separate server farm, SAN, and much of the data management software you pay a lot for. Nutanix has it all baked into a 2u form factor. All you need is to add a 10GbE switch, and you're ready to go.

We just deployed another new Nutanix environment last week for a new Client. The Client was able to install the system and be ready to run applications in about an hour. That's impressive.

HCI was initially used for VDI environments, because of the architecture's significantly reduced latency over traditional 3-Tier architectures. However, over 80% of new deployments of HCI are for server virtualization and we expect that percentage of go up.

Deployment of HCI doesn't appear to be limited to any one industry either. We're seeing it deployed across industries, including healthcare, education, manufacturing, financial services, retail, public sector, and many others.

The benefits End-Users are realizing include:
— Greatly simplified operations
— Much smaller form factor, resulting in lower environmental costs
— Reduction in software costs
— Overall much better performance
— Lower costs

Every one of our HCI Clients is happy with their installations, and all have continued to add to their environments. While Roundstone also represents a few other HCI vendors, we think Nutanix is the platform that is most advanced.

Roundstone is very experienced in HCI, and we can help you determine what potential benefits you might be able to yield from HCI. Give us a call at 925-217-117 or email us at sales@roundstonesolutions.com and we'll be happy to sit down and discuss your unique requirements.

We send this email version of the Roundstone Solutions Quarterly Newsletter to over 20,000 contacts every quarter. We try to keep our list 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, also let us know. We'll remove you from our mailing list right away. Thanks.

IN THIS ISSUE:

Dell's acquisition of EMC is on schedule

In October 2015, Dell surprised the IT world by announcing they were acquiring EMC. The combination of Dell and EMC is slated to create a company with annual sales of roughly $70-80 Billion, most of which is hardware. In anticipation of the acquisition closing, Dell has sold much of its software business, as well as its services business. Roundstone is a partner of both Dell and EMC.

Final approvals appear to have been given by all entities, including government agencies in North America, and Asia. It is expected the acquisition will be complete in October 2016.

Roundstone's principal has been through an acquisition like this, when HP and Compaq merged in 2002. That merger caused both companies to stall for some time prior to and immediately following the completion of the merger, as internal battles were fought to see which of the two companies would actually "win" and run the combined company. We expect much of the same with the Dell-EMC deal.

For most of its history, EMC has been known as a company that has a strong sales focus, and relentless focus on customer service. In our opinion, this focus often took the form of being over the line, but no one can argue with the results. Dell has always been known as the "low price leader". Which sales force will end up running the combined company? Which sales force SHOULD run the company?

Stay tuned; this one is only beginning to play out. We expect many, many changes in the near term. In the meantime, you still need to run your IT operations. Let Roundstone help you.

Traditional IT companies seem to be challenged

Looking at financial results of the more established companies in the IT industry, it seems as though a number of them are having a tougher time than in years past. Here's our take:

IBM: Seems destined to finally get out of the hardware business, and be a software and services play. Once known for its terrific sales force, IBM only has a couple of Account Executives in the entire State of CA. Wow! IBM's results continue to show reduced revenue and reduced profits.

HP: Now known as HPE, they completed a split from the printing and PC business that provided 75% of the profits of the previously combined business. HPE is selling off its services business, and now is dumping its software business. Exact opposite of IBM. Revenue and profit are stable.

EMC: Sales down. Forced to sell themselves to Dell. Core storage business stalled.

NetApp: Yikes. Sales down big. Profits down big. Seems like a long turnaround in store.

Cisco: Sales down, Profits down.

Oracle: Who can tell? Larry Ellison says things are going great…we can't tell. But hardware sales are down.

Nimble: Not really an older established vendor, but went public in last few years. Sales up, but using more money than ever. Unprofitable, and increasingly so, as it builds market share.

Pure: Same as Nimble

Brocade: Sales up. Profits up. Just bought Ruckus. In good shape.

We don't think public Cloud companies are taking all of the business away from the traditional IT companies. Rather, it's newer startups that are doing damage to the traditional vendors. When you add $400MM from Nutanix, and similar companies, that's where the business has gone. The Next Generation IT Infrastructure.

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Next Generation Network Attached Storage

For as long as we can remember, the network attached storage world has been the domain of NetApp, previously called Network Appliance. For years, NetApp was the only game in town, and they did a good job of it. NetApp delivered a Scale-up approach.

In 2003, Isilon came along and changed the game a bit. Offering a Scale-out approach, they were able to get over some of the performance issues that hampered network attached storage as it grew capacity. Early adopters of Isilon liked the technology. So did EMC, which bought Isilon in 2010.

The acquisition gave Isilon instant access to the EMC customer base, and conversely, gave EMC an entree into a part of the storage business they never had before (EMC had been all block storage, attached by Fibre Channel).

It's commonly understood that the network attached storage market has lagged the block storage market as it relates to performance and innovation. Advancements like hybrid storage and All Flash Arrays were introduced into the block storage market quite a bit before finding their way into the network attached storage markets. Part of this may be because Fibre Channel has typically been a faster connection option when compared to iSCSI, but that is changing. In fact, many newer storage options are introduced first with iSCSI connectivity.

Of course, you have heard that software defined anything is the new thing. We have software defined networking, software defined storage, and software defined data centers.

Qumulo is the next generation of network attached storage. It was formed in 2012 by engineers who developed the original Isilon platform. Their new product is so innovative that Kleiner Perkins, among others, have decided to back Qumulo.

Qumulo's product is called Core 2.0. The product is software, delivered via an appliance consisting of industry standard servers and storage. The product boasts performance improvements over NetApp and Isilon, as well as significantly simplified management of the storage environment.

Many market segments are big users of Network Attached Storage. Some of these include Pharma, BioTech, Life Sciences, Media and Entertainment, Legal, and others. Early adopters of the Qumulo platform have raved about the performance improvements, as well as the much lower price than NetApp and Isilon.

So, it might be time to take a look at an alternative to NetApp and Isilon. We'd be happy 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.

Next Generation Backup

One thing any data center manager will tell you is that they dislike having to do backups. It's necessary for the business, but they still don't like them. Because they aren't easy to do. Until now.

Roundstone partners with Rubrik, which provides a Next Generation Data Protection platform. The Rubrik system is a hyper-converged backup appliance, containing all of the necessary software required to ensure backups occur easily and effectively. Most important isn't the backup, but the restore, and that's where Rubrik really shines. With a hyper-converged appliance, you have all you need to run your business from the Rubrik appliance in the event of a systems outage.

Contact Roundstone for more information about Rubrik. We can be reached at tim@roundstonesolutions.com, or call us at 925-217-1177.

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Roundstone adds new Clients in 2Q16

A healthy business is one that is serving its Clients well, while growing its offerings and Client base. That's Roundstone Solutions; we added a number of new Clients in the second quarter of 2016, including Commercial accounts and Public Sector accounts alike.

Our goals for Fiscal 2016 are ambitious. We plan to double our Client base, as well as our company size. To do that, we're looking to gain new Clients. If you're already a Roundstone Client, thank you. If you're not yet a Client, we welcome the chance to earn your business. All we need is an opportunity. Roundstone is very experienced and knows IT Infrastructure very well. We can help you navigate the changing landscape, and we like to do so by getting to know you and your business plans. A Next Generation IT Infrastructure is in your future.

Give us a call and let's see if we can work together. We can be reached at sales@roundstonesolutions.com or at 925-217-1177.

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.

After some delays, look for the new Roundstone website to launch in late July. 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 Infrastructure Integrator based in Northern California. We help End-User Clients transform their IT infrastructure through the use of Next Generation IT Infrastructures. 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 Clients' 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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