



Hyper-Converged Infrastructure (HCI) and how it is changing the way we do IT

We're into the final stretch of 2018, and we thought it might be useful to talk at length about HCI, and how the platform is changing the way we do IT. For now, we'll talk only about the technology platform, and not about the specific vendors (more on Nutanix can be found inside).

Let's start by agreeing that IT departments are looking for ways to make their IT infrastructures more agile, which is a big reason why the Public Cloud holds so much interest. It's no longer acceptable to have a long application backlog due to inadequate/inflexible infrastructure, especially when the application work is being done by people who couldn't really care less about what or where the infrastructure is.

The old way of doing things includes trying to put various vendors' hardware and software together and make it all work. That requires large staffs and a large part of their daily work is spent maintaining and not innovating. That's also no longer acceptable. Companies want applications to be available quickly, and they want the business results that these applications promise.

Let's say you have Dell or HPE servers, EMC or NetApp storage, and VMware for the virtualization layer. In order for you to make sure you get maximum value out of this combination, you're dealing with 3 vendors, all of which have their own interests, capacity offerings, firmware levels, and price points. I'll use an analogy...it would be similar to if you bought a new car, but had to deal with GM for the car, Goodyear for the tires, separate companies for the seats, etc. Which wouldn't be effective or smart.

HCI gives you the chance to buy IT like you buy a car...complete. The servers are integrated with the storage, and the virtualization layer is already loaded and ties it all together. You can use whatever networking you want (think of that as the roadway...your car can drive on any road). It's a completely integrated package, and the car manufacturer takes care of it all. They make it work and they make sure it's easy to operate.

Users of HCI spend almost all of their time being able to innovate, as HCI systems require hardly any intervention...you set it and forget it. You can acquire the system in smaller increments, paying only for what's required. You never have to "buy ahead". Plus, you can ride Moore's Law of price decreases to your advantage.

I saw a picture post on Twitter this past weekend of an organization that was hard at work doing an operating system upgrade on a Sunday. All I could think of was that used to happen in the 80's, but it no longer happens for HCI users. Upgrades of HCI systems are done during the workday, and the systems do them automatically. With no impact.

You know all of this is true, because if you know the Public Cloud, that's how they do it. You don't have to go to AWS, Azure, or GCP to get this kind of innovation...you can do it in your own data center. It's easy...just ask anyone who runs HCI...they will tell you.

Roundstone Solutions specializes in HCI and related technologies. We'd like to help you. Call us at 925-217-1177 or email us at sales@roundstonesolutions.com. Thanks!

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Still using yesterday's backup technology?

When we started Roundstone Solutions, we decided to focus on Next Generation IT Infrastructures. There were two reasons for this. The first was that we were interested in where IT was going, not where it had already been. The second reason was that manufacturers didn't need another reseller of stuff they already had thousands of companies selling.

Focusing on Next Generation IT platforms is harder than selling the traditional IT infrastructure vendors (although that's changing). Getting users of traditional platforms to change from platforms they're familiar with isn't easy... there's a comfort factor to consider. Backup software is one of those platforms that people tend to stick with, even long after better alternatives are available. And better alternatives are definitely available.

Many companies have used Veritas NetBackup and Backup Exec, EMC's Data Domain and Avamar, Commvault, and a few others. Most of these platforms were architected back when traditional 3-tier infrastructure was all there was. Updates to these vendors' products have typically been incremental, not revolutionary. And, you'll admit, the cost of these products is very high. Why? Well, god forbid you ever needed to recover data and the backup software didn't work, right? Price wasn't a big factor...keeping your job was. So you paid whatever the vendors asked.

There's a better way.

We're in the Cloud era, whether it be Public or Private Cloud. Data continues to explode in most companies, and that data has increased in value. Some companies have adopted HCI, and that architecture can do so much more than the older backup software programs can take advantage of. Your backup environment needs to be updated to new technology.

Roundstone works with four backup vendors; Cohesity, Rubrik, HYCU, and Veeam. All vendors offer excellent backup products based on HCI technology (except Veeam). They are simple to deploy and simple to operate. They are "set it and forget it".

Modern backup software is based on industry standard hardware (often SuperMicro, but it could be any Intel based server) with adequate storage capacity to hold at least one primary copy of your data. Beyond that, archive copies are kept on any one of the Public Cloud vendors, or in some secondary storage that perhaps you'd decommissioned from primary storage. The value is in the software, not the hardware.

Cohesity and Rubrik allow you to acquire their products as appliances (very simple) or as software only, if you want to utilize hardware you've already invested in. HYCU is software only and runs as a virtual machine on one of your servers. Same with Veeam.

All vendors have been around for some time, so they aren't startups. Cohesity, Rubrik, and Veeam are valued at over \$1B, so they will be around for some time. So, it's not really much of a risk.

You can get more information about these vendors at www.cohesity.com, www.rubrik.com, www.hycu.com, and www.veeam.com.

Better technology, lower costs initially, and lower costs going forward. If you haven't looked at these backup vendors, you should do so in the near future. We can help...Roundstone Solutions partners with all four vendors, and we know how to take you through a complete evaluation.

Call us at 925-217-1177 or email us at sales@roundstonesolutions.com. Thanks!



How's Nutanix doing? GREAT!

For over 4 years, Roundstone Solutions has been partnered with Nutanix, and it's been an excellent partnership. We believe in the technology platform, and we think their HCI platform makes much more sense than what other infrastructure vendors are offering.

Nutanix is a fan of Roundstone, as well. Roundstone has focused on Nutanix for a major part of our business, and the investment we've made in learning and understanding the technology platform differentiates us from our competition. We know the platform, and we know how to introduce it to companies.

Nutanix introduced their platform in 2011, so they have been shipping working product for over 7 years. It's fair to say that they have been market proven, and their platform works as advertised. We have many Nutanix customers, and they are thrilled with the platform...all have added to it.

But Nutanix hasn't stood still. They recognize the world is about a hybrid IT model, and that means HCI vendors have to not only co-exist with the Public Cloud vendors, but also enable users to be able to use their platform wherever they see fit. Nutanix has invested a lot in making your experience the same on-premise as it is in the Public Cloud, if not better.

Nutanix has acquired a number of companies where it made sense to bring on technology faster. Some

of them are Calm, Minjar, and others. Those products have been integrated into the Nutanix product line, all enabling more and more for end users.

In Northern CA, users like to do things on their own. We have very astute customers here. Initially, some of these users felt they could create their own Private Cloud without the need to acquire Nutanix. Interestingly, we're now seeing many of them reach out to Nutanix to "just get it done".

We're also seeing some companies realize that putting some workloads into the Public Cloud wasn't the panacea that was expected. Flexibility was less and costs were higher. That was to be expected... the Public Cloud companies are in business to make a profit. Using Nutanix in your own data center will end up being being 40-70% less expensive, and give you far more control over your destiny.

Nutanix, in their last fiscal year, showed revenue of over \$1B. This year, it's expected that the figure will top \$1.5B, showing over 50% growth in a market that is growing fast. A solid company.

If you haven't taken a look at Nutanix yet, it's probably time to do so. You'll quickly see how you can benefit, and you'll be pleased. We can help... call us at 925-217-1177 or email us at sales@roundstonesolutions.com. Let's get started!

Gartner's Magic Quadrant for HCI

Nutanix is the leader in every report that's written about HCI; Gartner, Forrester, and others. You'll see Nutanix is ahead of all others in Gartner Magic Quadrant for HCI.

Nutanix is the only vendor that completely rewrote the file system, which gives it a performance advantage over all comers. You'll typically find pricing from Nutanix to beat others.

Let us help you with Nutanix. We're the experts in Northern CA.

Figure 1. Magic Quadrant for Hyperconverged Infrastructure



Source: Gartner (February 2018)



You moved your Email to the Cloud...time for your communications to go there too

Roundstone Solutions is all about Next Generation IT Infrastructures. We work not only in the data center, but also with user facing technology platforms. We'd like to talk about one of them.

Unified Communications. You're probably running either an Avaya or Cisco UC system in your data center. Or maybe you've still got an older switch from another vendor. Regardless, your voice system is probably older, and requires a lot of effort and cost to keep running. If you add up what you pay for your hardware, software, support, and the people to run and manage the system, it's a big number.

Your employees are using video services like Zoom and others, messaging like Slack and Lync, and collaboration like WebEx and GoToMeeting. There are others, all of which make the point I'm about to make. It's not easy integrating all of this. In fact, you've probably given up on having it all integrated. It's just too hard to do. But aren't all of these tools supposed to make things easier overall?

There's a far better and less costly way. Unified Communications as a Service, also known as UCaaS.

UCaaS takes all of your voice systems and puts them in the Cloud. You no longer have to deal with managing the systems part of things. Integrated into the voice application is messaging, video, and collaboration...all in one application that can run on your desk phone, your computer, and as an app on your cell phone.

The three main vendors in the space are Fuze, Ring Central, and 8x8. All have been around for over 10 years, but are only now getting real traction because of the economics involved.

Roundstone Solutions partners with Fuze, because they are the company with the largest amount of Enterprise Class customers, and we tend to work with Enterprise customers. Based in Boston, Fuze is well funded, and their customers are very happy with the platform and company.

We'd like to introduce you to Fuze. Please give us a call at 925-217-1177 or email us at sales@roundstonesolutions.com. Let's begin the process of seeing if UCaaS from Fuze will bring the benefits you're looking for. Thanks.

About Roundstone Solutions

Roundstone Solutions is an IT Infrastructure Solutions Provider now based in Orinda, CA (we moved in mid-2018). We help our Clients by enabling much higher performing, lower cost, scalable, simpler, next generation IT infrastructures.

Our relentless focus is to be Northern California's leading VAR/Partner/Reseller with the highest level of satisfaction as measured by our Clients. We accomplish this by first understanding our Clients' business objectives, and then matching appropriate technology solutions to get the job done right. **We succeed when our Clients improve their IT infrastructures, resulting in better business outcomes.**

Please see more about Roundstone Solutions at www.roundstonesolutions.com. Our blog can be found at <http://timjoyce-roundstonesolutions.blogspot.com>, and is updated regularly. We can also be found on Twitter

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