Market Roundup

November 16, 2007

IBM Announces new POWER6 Blade and Energy Efficiency Software

By Clay Ryder

IBM has introduced a new POWER6 processor-based blade system, the IBM BladeCenter JS22 Express, that features two dual-core POWER6 processors with Advanced POWER Virtualization, which in Standard Edition enables a single server to host up to ten virtual servers per processor core. The new APV Enterprise Edition adds the UNIX-exclusive Live Partition Mobility feature, a unique virtualization technique that integrates chip technology, firmware, and POWER Hypervisor technology to enable POWER6 processor-based servers to move live logical partitions, including the operating system and all associated applications, from one server to another while the systems are running. According to the company, the EnergyScale technology in the POWER chips may reduce processor power consumption by up to 30%. A new offering, IBM Systems Director Active Energy Manager (formerly IBM PowerExecutive), leverages the energy management features of POWER6 EnergyScale technology to provide features such as power trending, power saving, power capping, and thermal measurement/reporting that enable improved facility planning, energy savings, and peak energy usage control. IBM also announced the new Availability Factory, which is modeled on the highly successful IBM Migration Factory and IBM Server Consolidation Factory, and allows qualified Solaris and HP/UX UNIX customers to get a no-charge assessment of how to implement their own roadmaps while moving to AIX and POWER. POWER6 processor-based Blade systems for AIX, Linux on POWER, and i5/OS are scheduled to be available on BladeCenter H and BladeCenter HT chassis beginning November 30. A JS22 Express configuration, including 4GB memory, a 73GB hard disk, and BladeCenter H chassis is priced at $10,363. Advanced POWER Virtualization and related software will be made generally available on November 9. IBM Systems Director Active Energy Manager is scheduled for general availability on December 14. APV Enterprise Edition is available as a “no-charge upgrade” to all existing POWER6 processor-based System p 570 APV Standard Edition users and at the same price as APV Standard Edition for all new System p 570 buyers through end of year. APV Standard Edition will be added at no-license fee to each POWER blade server.

For POWER blade aficionados, this announcement will likely be welcomed with open arms. While POWER blades are not new, this is the first POWER6 blade and more importantly, the first blade equipped with APV and Live Partition Mobility. For organizations that are seriously undertaking UNIX and Linux consolidation strategies, the enhanced performance of the JS22 proffers greater consolidation efficacy while the partition mobility delivers flexibility that a scant few years ago would have only been an IT pipedream. Taken in conjunction with the EnergyScale capabilities, this gives IT professionals considerably more flexibility in where they house applications, a potential increase in the headroom for dynamic peaks, and as loads are shed during off hours the ability to reduce peak performance in favor of power thriftiness if not reduction in the total number of servers operating. For many, this is simply cool, and an achievement of which Big Blue can be rightly proud. Further, the availability of Systems Director AEM offers datacenter managers greater insight into the operational characteristics of their systems to effect further savings and operational efficiencies. In a datacenter that is near or already at the envelope for power and/or cooling capacity, incremental improvements around the edge of the

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energy envelope can make the difference between additional CAP EX expenditure, or the building of a new facility. This feature should appeal to the CIO, CFO, and CEO as well as the IT directors and staff.

As we have said before, to us the POWER6 is more than an incremental improvement on a venerable architecture, it has enabled organizations to revisit their assumptions about the limits of their physical infrastructure as well as environmental/energy footprints. With support for the BladeCenter H and HT chassis now in hand, the ability to physically consolidate and simplify workloads is even greater. The improvements in reporting and hence the managing and allocation of resource consumption of the POWER6 processor may prove attractive to organizations that are seeking to squeeze every bit of efficiency from their IT investments while simultaneously reducing their energy expense and increasing the number of workloads that can be supported within the physically constraints of the existing datacenter. Combined with the Availability Factory, the new capabilities of the POWER6 blades, APV, and Partition/Application mobility, this latest announcement may well entice even the most reticent IT professional to consider the potential of POWER6 platform as part of their organization's strategic IT roadmap.

HP Updates Integrity Systems

By Clay Ryder

HP has refreshed its Integrity server line with the latest processor technology and new software to help customers reduce costs through enhanced automation and improved energy efficiency. The Integrity systems family of servers and server blades are now powered by the latest Itanium 9100 series processor formerly known by code name Montvale which according to the company offer up to a 20% price/performance increase over previous generations. HP is extending its common remote management solution for BladeSystem, ProLiant servers, and entry-class Integrity servers to include HP Integrity cell-based servers. HP Integrity Integrated Lights-Out 2 (iLO 2) is now available for Integrity servers and the company has standardized on the iLO GUI for both ProLiant and Integrity servers. In addition, HP Integrity servers are adding new power monitoring and regulation capabilities with tools that allow customers to monitor remotely actual power consumption and thermal output on Integrity entry-class and blade servers. This in combination with HP Thermal Logic for HP Integrity servers, these new Integrity iLO 2 and HP Insight Power Manager tools enable customers to monitor and regulate server power and switch power states as needed to effect reduce power and cooling overhead across the data center.

November seems to be shaping up as the new processor upgrade month, with this announcement from HP regarding its Itanium systems, and IBM's POWER6 blade update, and Sun's Netra 10g ATCA System and Blades with T2 CPUs. Although incremental improvements in processor speed is pretty much a given, focusing solely on the processor itself misses the largest picture. In the case of HP, the value afforded by the Integrity server family is much more than it being based upon the latest Itanium processor. Rather, the plethora of ancillary and supporting hardware, software, and services is what actually differentiates HP's offerings. While it is popular to talk about green datacenters, when one stops to realize what is truly necessary to make this a reality, features such as iLO2, Thermal Logic, and Insight Power Manager become more relevant than ever. With this announcement we see HP further standardizing its tools such as remote management, and the iLO GUI across its multiple server families and increasingly bladed offerings. This systems-level approach incorporates much more than raw processing ability, and ultimately to our way of thinking delivers more value to customers and their organizations. It also reflects the bigger picture view that HP has been taking with respect to its customers needs, not only for the latest and greatest technology, but also their other financial and operational needs.

Overall, we see this announcement as evidence of HP's continued march along its strategic path of making IT technologies that represent the state of the art from an engineering perspective, but also its continued investment in adding value to raw technology through enhanced management software, tools, and new system-level features. For organizations that have embraced HP as a strategic vendor for their datacenter, these latest improvements will likely be well received and further bolster HP's solutions oriented vision for the datacenter.

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Novell Enhanced Single Sign-On Includes Vista Support

By Lawrence D. Dietz

Novell has announced enhancements to its single sign-on solution, including support for Windows Vista, improved authentication capabilities, easier administration, and expanded applications support. An integral part of Novell's portfolio of identity and security management solutions, Novell SecureLogin is a scalable and comprehensive enterprise single sign-on solution, featuring advanced security capabilities to help customers meet compliance mandates for multi-factor authentication, automate and simplify password management, and lower IT administration costs. Novell SecureLogin works with existing directories and can be deployed in less than ten minutes. When deployed with Novell Identity Manager, Novell Access Manager, and Novell Sentinel, Novell SecureLogin gives enterprise customers a complete, integrated identity and security management stack for supporting IT compliance, risk management, and governance requirements.

In addition to Windows Vista support, Novell SecureLogin supports other popular operating systems and Web browsers, including Windows XP, Internet Explorer, and Mozilla Firefox. Strong authentication features help organizations comply with new regulations, such as Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council guidelines for online banking that require more than one factor of authentication, by enabling integration with smart cards, biometrics, and proximity cards in conjunction with user names and passwords. An updated centralized administration interface simplifies installation and provides integration with Novell identity and security management solutions to allow IT staff to centrally manage credentials, policies, and single sign-on activities on Microsoft Active Directory, Novell eDirectory, or a generic LDAP directory. SecureLogin also provides streamlined access to enterprise applications including SAP, Front.exe, Microsoft SQL Server, Citrix Program Neighborhood, Lotus Notes and Novell GroupWise. Novell SecureLogin also supports more than thirty terminal-based applications, as well as Java-based applications and complex Web applications.

It appears likely that 2008 will see a dramatic uptick in the Identity Management Market, as many organizations become highly motivated to employ IDM as a means to help thwart unauthorized attempts at obtaining protected data. Recent publicity and litigation associated with the TJ Maxx credit card breach combined with other embarrassments to government and private enterprises are pushing end-user organizations to seek out and implement identity-oriented security measures. We believe that SecureLogin's ability to employ single sign-on in conjunction with Microsoft Active Directory and other LDAP directors, and its and central administration are both critically important to managing large or even medium-scale IDM projects.

It is clear to us that the costs associated with the disclosure laws already implemented in forty states will continue to increase and that IDM and encryption will see increased sales in 2008 as a result. Furthermore, we believe that the middle market especially will turn to trusted brand names for these products which puts Novell in an excellent position to capitalize on its existing penetration and reputation.

Fujitsu Siemens Computers Updates x10sure Virtualization

By Clay Ryder

Fujitsu Siemens Computers has announced enhanced consolidation flexibility in its second-generation x10sure server, which now features x10sure support for VMware server virtualization, as well as an iSCSI storage option and enhanced storage redundancy. x10sure version two offers a stepped approach to incorporating VMware virtualization into server configurations where a few virtual servers can be added to an x10sure configuration, using the entry-level VMware Server product. For environments where there is an increased need for system utilization, additional virtual servers are supported through the mid-range VMware ESX Standard Edition product, which allows a fixed allocation of system resources between virtual machines. For high-end virtualization requirements, x10sure has an ESX Server Enterprise Edition, which combines the VMware Virtual Infrastructure 3 package, allowing automated migration of virtual servers for high availability or load balancing. New support for iSCSI storage, fully redundant SAN, and on-demand connection at boot level to IP-based SAN boxes such as filers from storage partner Network Appliance was also announced for x10sure. Entry level pricing begins at €9,200 for a five-node license.

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This latest release from FSC broadens the capabilities, and appeal, of the x10sure product line. For small organizations that are seeking clustering or advanced virtualization and failover without a gold-plated price tag, the level of High Availability that x10sure provides would likely qualify as “good enough” for many organizations. With its new VMware support and iSCSI, the x10sure now supports two of the more popular features that are attractive to the midsize and smaller marketplace. For the entry-level segment of the market, VMware has become almost an expected part of server solutions, in part due to its cost-effective approach to leverage IT assets and enhance efficiencies, but more importantly due to its well understood, straightforward approach to management and deployment. When taken with iSCSI and/or redundant SAN connectivity, the combination offers considerable flexibility in how IT professionals can choose to deploy server and storage resources.

This centralized approach to storage offers smaller organizations an opportunity to enhance their operational approach to storage, which at present is probably not very strategic and carries the attendant risk that much of the corporate data may reside in storage silos, not being centrally catalogued and backed up. The new storage connectivity options may encourage some organizations to bring a departmental x10sure into “the big picture” through interconnection into the main corporate SAN. For the smaller organization, x10sure could be a logical solution to help move the organization along the HA and centralized storage continuum, but without the historic barrier of high cost and a more complex operational topology.

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