

NetEvents: Of change and convergence

Mehak Chawla

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From networking to unified communications, from Ethernet to video, from data center to energy efficiency, there was very little that was left undiscussed at the NetEvents APAC Summit. The summit that was held in Singapore was spread across May 18 to May 21.

And for the major part of it, the focus remained on the enormous change that the IT landscape of APAC region is witnessing. The summit aimed to put in perspective the consequences and the opportunities that a booming IT environment can throw up.

And, it so happened that India emerged as a point of confluence for vendors and analysts alike. While there is still a word of caution for the emerging markets like Vietnam, no one disputed the fact that India is a market that is already in the big picture and if you aren't present in India, you indeed are missing a lot of action!

Single Umbrella

Jay Mellman, senior director, networking division, HP remarked in his opening speech that tomorrow's IT, and it's already begun, is going to be built on the converged infrastructure. And, that premise in itself changes the way we perceive a lot of things.



Richard Kagan, Infoblox, Greg Fairbanks, Fanfare Software, Daniel Bar-Lev, VCO Forum

As Mellman explained, "Not only do people have to buy servers, storage, networking, software and security as though they are going through an individual price book; but they also now need to think about it. The technology is evolving. So, it is the interaction between these technologies, the synergies that becomes important."

Thus, this sparked off the great networking debate and while Mellman explained how they at HP did it, a lot

of discussions centered around the demands that a complex IT infrastructure can exert upon today's CXOs. It was the virtualization debate that not only got a lot of questions, but also a confession that virtualization if not put in the right hands and perspective can actually end up substantially escalating your costs in the long run.

Another interesting thing that came out was the emergence of Australia as a significant market for virtualization. According to Tim Dillon, AVP, research, IDC, "Australia is quite a mature market. If you look at that chart, New Zealand, Hong Kong and Singapore are relatively low penetration markets right now; but a lot is coming into the marketplace in terms of new shipments. So a lot of focus is on virtualization."

Dillon came up with a couple of examples. He said, "In Singapore, I think energy costs have risen 12% this year, give or take - 12%. That is being driven by the change in the price of oil. That has an impact upon your data center and your virtualization environment or your server environment too. In Australia, the expectations are that in the next three years, energy costs will rise 60%. Now if you have like we do in Australia heavy loading on data centers, high energy consumption, not much available space is left if you would like to push more servers into the data center. So, a 60% increase in costs over the next three years in the business is absolutely crippling. So, that is a major problem."

Thus, come the issues of server utilization and virtualization. The third significant bit, as per Dillon, is simplification of management. A server environment can be complex. The thing about virtualization is that it's supposed to make it easier for you.



L-R: Jay Mellman, HP, Jim Machi, Dialogic, Daniel Bar-Lev, VCO Forum, Richard Norris, Wainhouse Research, Ofer Shapiro, Vidyo discussing unified communication

However, does that really happen? Not always, according to Dillon. He gives the example of an organization in Australia, a large corporate, which says that it went down a two year path of virtualization. It didn't work. It's more costly, less efficient, how then go back to a physical environment. This is an organization that has a global footprint, and spent three years investing in a virtualized environment.

Increasing management costs post virtualization is something that a lot of organizations are complaining of. But according to analysts, this cost is what should be kept in mind before going down the virtualized way.

Dillon concluded, "I think we have to be careful when we look at virtualization and say it's all these things, it's going to be great, it's a panacea to all our business requirements around the data center environment. There are some catches."

Over and above the virtual debate, there were other sessions that revolved around data centers, unified communications, converged IT infrastructure and the cloud cover.

Video Everywhere

Be it your unified communications setup, your going green drive or your travel costs, video is something that emerges as a hotspot in all these discussions.

According to Ofer Shapiro, CEO, Vidyo, "The number one question that customers ask us I have an IM system, how do I start a video call from my IM system in an easy way? Fortunately for that, there are simple recipes that one can follow. There are market leaders in the IM space. You can integrate with them through certain APIs and you got it."

There are other cheaper ways too that can bring Vidyo to you right at your desktop. And vidyo, for one, is a

vendor that has embarked on providing video at prices that you can only gawk at, more so, if Cisco is what you have set your standards by.

Mapping India Up

On a final note, it is heartening to see that India is actually a strategic location for almost all the vendors we met and interacted with vendors like Infoblox who are just beginning to make a mark here, to others like Exalt who seem hugely excited about the Indian market.

India, if our discussions were anything to go by, has a place for everything from virtualization to video and from network optimizing devices to Ethernet.

Its no longer a part of paper work, it is a part of strategic measures now. It gets all the more clear when we see the vendors who are not already here, making serious plans to be cut where the action is!

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The author was hosted by NetEvents in Singapore