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Leading Industry Groups Create the ‘Open Cloud Project’

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The CloudEthernet Forum (CEF) and MEF have announced the creation of the CEF ‘Open Cloud Project.’ The Open Cloud Project will focus on creating an open test and iterative standards development program for service providers, industry vendors and over-the-top (OTT) cloud service providers.

The Open Cloud Project includes a dedicated proof of concept test laboratory based in Silicon Valley, to provide ongoing testing and support for the iterative development of the CEF’s CloudE 1.0 open cloud environment. It will also provide the basis of future compliance and benchmark testing.

Informed by the experience and learning of its close association with the MEF, and seeing the benefits that rapid, iterative development has brought to the cloud industry, the CEF is taking the pioneering step of integrating testing into the standards development process right from the start.

Initial work will be focused on three areas: application performance management, cloud security and traffic load balancing. The project’s open test program will lay the groundwork for a fully inter-working cloud environment, and the advancement of best practices to manage OTT and cloud services.

“This is vitally important work if we are to avoid fragmentation of the cloud,” explains James Walker, CEF President and Vice President of Managed Network Services at Tata Communications. “Cloud services rely on the end to end interoperability of so many players – enterprises, network and datacenter equipment vendors, datacenter operators, orchestration layers, management and reporting platforms, security devices, network service providers – the list goes on. The MEF has shown a successful model of defining service types and attributes which everyone can agree to and align with, which through this test bed we can adapt and bring to the cloud industry. Unless we can define industry best practices and global standards to establish an open cloud environment, cloud services run the risk of becoming more and more fragmented and difficult to integrate.”

The Open Cloud Project is an industry leading program of the CEF, a close affiliate of the MEF with a combined 240+ members, made up of leading equipment and cloud software vendors and the world’s largest telecommunications providers and cable operators.

“Network security and application performance management are two critical areas for future work,” said Nan Chen, president of the MEF. “The Open Project is intended to create an open test process for NFV, SDN and Carrier Ethernet applications. We also plan to work in conjunction with other relevant influential industry forums to maximize efficiencies and avoid any duplication of work.”

“The industry faces a real challenge: simultaneously integrating three relatively new concepts – NFV, SDN and Carrier Ethernet – to create an open cloud environment,” said Jeff Schmitz, CEF Chairman and Executive Vice President of Spirent Communications. “Here’s a chance to test and standardize your cloud

services with an initial focus on application performance management, cloud security and traffic load balancing. If you want to be involved in the future of cloud, the CEF is your chance to put your ideas to the test.”

Analyst Rohit Mehra, Vice President, Network Infrastructure at IDC agreed with the need for an initiative such as the Open Cloud Project being spearheaded by the CEF, saying: “By 2017, IDC expects worldwide spending on public IT cloud services to exceed \$100 billion, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 23.5% for the period 2013-2017, five times that of the IT industry as a whole. Hence it is important we look at cloud interoperability as a key goal across the spectrum of vendors and cloud service providers that will participate in this growth.

The CEF has already started work on defining a reference architecture for cloud interoperability, including discussion with other standards bodies to make sure that work is aligned. The aim this year is to decide the initial, fundamental criteria for a set of standardized, open and interoperable cloud specifications called “CloudE 1.0”. The lab will play a key role in this development, ensuring faster establishment of workable and proven open standards.