Clever thinking takes SDN advantages to the wider branch network

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Software Defined Networks (SDN) has been a revolutionary approach to networking. Its principal idea is that more and more of what was previously hardware based should be controlled centrally by software.

This centralised software control of networking devices has enabled a lot of automation, which in turn has saved countless man hours doing repetitive setup, configuration and management.

Up until now, SDN has been focused on data centers and large telco service provider networks.

VeloCloud is determined to change that. They want to take the automation and central control that SDN offers to the branch network.

They're calling it SD-WAN, referring to the wide area network within an enterprise.

They have a clever edge device that would be ideal in small branch offices. It has routing, switching & wireless functions all centrally controlled via SDN.

Most crucially they have a cloud-based SDN controller, which can control either its own devices or open standards-based networking devices from other brands. These could routers, network switches or wireless access points out in the field or branch offices.

Lastly, they have a very intelligent web-based orchestration tool. This enables the organisation to create central policy for their SD-Wan, then apply that setup and config to its devices. The tool also extends to management and reporting.

It sells all three solutions including its edge devices on a subscription basis.

Analysts Frost & Sullivan and IDC are both covering this newly defined SD-WAN market. Existing networking heavyweights like Cisco and Riverbed are expected to have 50% compound annual growth up until 2020.

During the same period, pure play specialists like VeloCloud are expected to grow by 100% per annum and the carriers that provide SDN-WAN as a service around 200% per annum.

Combining these three segments, predictions are that the current $250 million space will grow into a $6 billion market, again by 2020.

IDC says SD-WAN can offer cost-effective delivery of business applications, meeting the evolving operational requirements of the modern branch/remote site, optimising software-as-a-service (SaaS) and cloud-based services such as unified communication and collaboration and improving branch-IT efficiency through automation.

Rohit Mehra, IDC vice president of network infrastructure, says WAN performance is becoming critical for latency-sensitive and mission critical workloads and inter-data centre business continuity, as public and private cloud use continues to grow.

"Accordingly, as enterprises plan and implement comprehensive cloud strategies, WAN architectures need to be considered alongside, and in conjunction with, data centre infrastructure," Mehra says.

"VeloCloud is the leader in cloud-delivered SD-WAN and is poised to drive dramatic transformation for enterprises and service providers around the world," said Michael Wood, Vice President of Marketing, VeloCloud.

"VeloCloud is in the right place with the right solution at the right time."