Market Roundup

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Sun Microsystems Launches New Eco-Focused Community

By Clay Ryder

Sun Microsystems has launched OpenEco.org, a new community to help organizations calculate, compare, and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. OpenEco.org is free and open to all organizations; the cost of participation is the sharing of data, transparently or anonymously, with other community participants. OpenEco.org is positioned as an organization that can fill an important need as companies, government institutions, and non-governmental organizations are facing increasing pressure to set improvement goals and invest in projects to meet them. To date, GHG analysis has largely been done with home-grown or proprietary tools that can often require significant internal resources or expensive consulting services. With OpenEco.org, carbon accounting data that might ordinarily remain in a company's spreadsheet can be easily shared using the site's unique GHG emissions tool, which enables organizations of all kinds to benchmark against one another, set realistic reduction goals, and share best practices to meet them. Ceres, a coalition of investors and environmental groups, has joined OpenEco.org as an early participant as has Natural Logic whose Founder and CEO Gil Friend has served as a key technical advisor to the site. Prior to launching OpenEco.org, Sun began sharing its own emissions data and best practices online to help other companies reduce their footprint as well. Sun also posts case studies and best practices about how it has altered its own datacenters worldwide to make them more eco-friendly.

Sometimes the best thing to do with a drum is to beat it. With this announcement, we see Sun continuing its efforts to highlight eco responsibility, or green initiatives. While the company has done quite a bit with respect to its products and services in order to lower its overall ecological impact, the company is now drawing on its expertise in creating user/industry communities towards other ends. This initiative, similar to the Open Architecture Network that shares blueprints, ideas, and resources for improvement projects in areas affected by hardship, focuses attention on GHG emissions and seeks to bring together expertise from multiple industry experts. From this collective effort it would follow not only that greater awareness of the issue would result, but that actionable data and perhaps best practices can be collectively formed and disseminated to the greater marketplace.

While this initiative is not a silver bullet, it is one of many of what we believe to be essential tools in the quest for improved eco responsibility by IT vendors and end user organizations. The importance of community efforts should not be underestimated as they provide a valuable information resource and information delivery vehicle to help reach many in the market who may not realize the significance of the issues, nor the opportunities that they afford. The first step towards dealing with any issue is being aware that it exists. Information such as that which OpenEco.org plans to collect and disseminate is essential to promoting awareness. It is clear that Sun, as well as all systems vendors, has a vested interest in eco stewardship in the datacenter for without it, the ability of organizations to continue to consume vendors' products will be stymied. Nevertheless, we believe the leadership that Sun is demonstrating in its ongoing eco responsibility initiatives is worthy of praise and recognition and if it also helps the company sell more products and services, that's okay too.

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New FireEye Appliance Addresses Growing Bot Threat

By Lawrence D. Dietz

FireEye, Inc. has announced an integrated anti-botnet solution that couples the global FireEye Botwall Network with its FireEye Botwall appliances. The FireEye anti-botnet solution is built from the ground up to combat the stealthy, targeted malware unleashed via remotely controlled and compromised PCs, also known as bots. The FireEye Botwall Network, which provides unprecedented intelligence on botnet command and control (C&C) as well as detection and analysis of propagation activities, gives organizations a complete view of the botnet threat landscape. FireEye provides anti-botnet protection with the FireEye Botwall 4000 appliance and the FireEye Botwall Network service, a globally deployed botnet discovery and analysis service offering which provides subscribers with the most current botnet intelligence to complement on-premise anti-botnet security appliances. It catalogs and disseminates botnet characteristics derived from malware analyses that are conducted by interconnected networks of FireEye Botwall appliances selectively deployed at service providers around the world.

Enterprise customers using FireEye Botwall appliances can subscribe to the FireEye Botwall Network to gain visibility into botnet C&C structures and locations, propagation tactics, and malicious activities. The service delivers pre-emptive protection with global awareness and local network analysis to precisely identify, understand, and stop emerging botnet and malware threats. The FireEye Botwall 4000 Series is a next-generation, locally deployed security appliance that protects customers by derailing a bot infiltration attack from preventing the initial breach and downloading the first bot command payload as well as blocking active communications to known malicious botnet servers. The FireEye Botwall appliances employ three classes of anti-botnet technologies: discovery, on-premise botnet propagation analysis coupled with global botnet C&C data; control, whereby customers can extinguish botnet propagation activities and unauthorized communications; and audit, by which botwall appliance analyses, reports, and alerts ensure IT management stays ahead of botnet infiltration attacks. The patent-pending FireEye Analysis and Control Technology (FACT) engine analyzes network traffic for botnet malware and botnet C&C server communications within virtual victim machines. This technique surpasses the limitations and inaccuracies of traditional signatures or network behavioral heuristics to protect customers from botnet penetration and exploitation.

Bots have proven themselves to be a major threat in today's environment, and will continue to be a significant threat in the next several years because perpetrators have had an easy time of setting up botnets and more importantly have been able to devise a well orchestrated way of monetizing their crimes by renting out these networks to others with nefarious intentions. The trends of financially motivated attacks and more focused targeting by cyber criminals are also sure to continue.

We are pleased by the FireEye combination of intelligence as an accompaniment to the appliance because of the evolving and dynamic nature of the bot threat. By offering alternative means to control and mitigate the botnet threat, FireEye is targeting on what we believe is a key threat vector and may be able to help high-profile target organizations such as financial institutions, government entities, energy companies, and pharmaceutical organizations to reduce their vulnerability to this threat.

IBM Innovation Center for Entrepreneurship

By Clay Ryder

IBM has announced it will open a new IBM Innovation Center in Dallas, Texas to help start-up companies, software developers, and ISVs create new software and hardware applications and services. The new Innovation Center will provide technical support and expertise to assist in building and optimizing applications based on open platforms while additionally seeking to meet the growing demand from Business Partners and venture funded organizations looking to harness IBM expertise around innovative technologies such as System z, Cell Broadband Engine, and SOA. With the new center, IBM now has more than thirty-five Innovation Centers worldwide that in 2006 alone hosted 6,000+ business partners who leveraged the centers to build and test new solutions. Businesses throughout the world will also be able to take advantage of the resources available at the Dallas center as IBM now provides a well connected global support for Business Partners, independent of their location. IBM will enhance the global integration network to seamlessly connect its worldwide Innovation Centers,

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thus providing instant access to top researchers and technical experts for all companies, regardless of their proximity to a center. For example, a Business Partner who requests an engagement with its local IBM Innovation Center in Dublin, Ireland may learn that the center in Dallas, Texas is better equipped to meet its technical needs. Through an Internet connection, the company will be able to receive hands-on support from its local IBM team while leveraging the technical resources of an IBM Innovation Center halfway around the world.

Although IBM Innovation Centers are not new, their continued growth in both number as well as engagements is an important factor as the company furthers its competitive push in the marketplace. For many, being able to touch, taste, or handle merchandise can often make the difference between "sold" and "no thanks." Given the choice of technologies available from Big Blue, for many it could prove a daunting task to understand which choices make the most sense for a given need. Further, for software developers as well as ISVs, the choice of platform to support for a given application can mean the difference between financial success and ruin. With the risk (and reward) being so high, the value of Innovation Centers starts to become clear.

Through its offering of local or remote access to equipment that provides a "safe" test bed for application development, Big Blue can showcase its technical abilities while at the same time helping to assuage the concerns of potential new users for its platforms, or to entice established customers to try an alternative hardware or software platform. Even though this center is being located in the growing tech market of Dallas, for many organizations the physical location of the centers is less important than the equipment or services that they offer. Given the proliferation of affordable high-speed Internet links, some who avail themselves of IBM Innovation Centers may find that they are accessing multiple centers, based upon need, across dispersed geographies. While having a presence in marquee cities will also be an important part of the program, at least from a marketing perspective, the technological enablement that the program offers is ultimately the greatest value to the developer, ISV, channel partner, or potential customer, and is an asset that we believe can act as a considerable enticement for the partner and user community at large to continue to engage with Big Blue.

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