

## Red Hat Reorganizes for Linux, Middleware and Virtualization

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Red Hat's 2008 Summit focused on architecture, APIs and open-source software tools. Now Red Hat must deliver on its claims of physical and virtual management automation with competitive certified and integrated solutions.

## NEWS ANALYSIS

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### Event

On 19 June 2008, at its annual summit, Red Hat announced its hypervisor strategic direction (oVirt for KVM), the release of Red Hat Enterprise Identity, Policy and Audit (IPA) and a virtualization management infrastructure based on open-source software (OSS).

### Analysis

Announcements made at Red Hat's annual summit in June 2008 mark a turning point in how Red Hat intends to position itself to the market. The implementations — available by year-end 2008 — will attempt to broaden Red Hat's horizons through several deliverables:

- As an option, deliver an embedded hypervisor — Kernel-based Virtual Machine (KVM) — on 64MB flash with live migration on a lean version of Red Hat Enterprise Linux.
- Be the integrator of virtualization management from OSS projects through the use of the Libvirt application programming interface (API).
- Deliver identity and policy management for Linux and Unix based on its Identityx acquisition of virtual directory, alongside Red Hat Directory Server, as a rival to Microsoft's Active Directory.
- Build a service-oriented architecture product set based on JBoss as a middleware Java stack.
- Collaborate with the University of Wisconsin's Condor project to advance Linux through a high-performance, low-latency, real-time operating system, messaging server, and fabric within cloud computing and services.

This announcement commits Red Hat to developing a coherent road map into broader OSS system integration and services. But Red Hat faces commercial issues similar to those faced by other vendors (such as Sun) as they seek to make OSS a key driver of a growth business.

- Red Hat must monetize its subscription services. Open-source projects that have been successfully commercialized — such as MySQL and JBoss, which both have a \$50 million to \$70 million annual revenue run rate — have gained a great deal of user traction, but have attained conservative results at being monetized into subscription services.
- Red Hat must define and integrate in "jigsaw puzzle" fashion a variety of projects so that they result in a seamless virtualization infrastructure and management architecture.

Red Hat's initiatives will likely require a multiyear effort to yield significant revenue. Success will require customers to consider Red Hat and their channel partners as trusted system integrators.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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### Enterprises:

- Expect Red Hat to deliver a systems management certification service.

- If you have been predisposed to use Xen, test and verify the KVM-patched Linux kernel for comparable virtualization features such as performance, automation and maintenance.
- If you have Red Hat Satellite services, bring the code in-house (through Spacewalk) to reconsider and strengthen negotiations around Red Hat commercial licenses and pricing.
- In test/development environments of virtualization and automation, use OSS projects such as Puppet and Cobbler to define configuration and provisioning management against proprietary products such as BladeLogic and Opsware.
- If you want to manage the identity and authorization of users to specific Linux-related projects using Kerberos and LDAP, begin a "sandbox" integration effort around Red Hat Enterprise IPA to check levels of integration, functionality and scaling. Do not plan migrations from other identity management solutions (such as those from Sun, Novell or Microsoft) and be cautious of any commitment of interoperability with application development.
- If you have Linux deployments in alternate virtualized or nonvirtualized environments, check that your software licenses and support contracts are valid in a KVM and virtual machine environment, especially when moving from a test/development deployment into production.

## RECOMMENDED READING

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- "Virtualization Changes Virtually Everything" — Gartner's comprehensive Special Report focuses on the impact of virtualization on traditional IT focus areas, as well as future impact and planning aspects. **By Philip Dawson and Thomas Bittman**
- "The State of Open Source, 2008" — More than 50 Gartner analysts offer a multidimensional view on the elusive but high-impact topic of the current state of OSS. **By Yefim Natis and others**

(You may need to sign in or be a Gartner client to access the documents referenced in this First Take.)

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