

## Cisco Cloud Unfiltered Podcast Series, Episode 7: Jeff Dickey, Redapt



Let's just say this: Jeff took us very seriously when we said "unfiltered." Want to hear what someone close to the action thinks about the future of OpenStack? Open source as a business model? Vendor lock-in? Cloud as a tool for reducing headcount? Jeff is your man. Read on.

**Niki Acosta:** Good morning. Good afternoon. Good evening. Good whatever time it is wherever you are. This is Niki Acosta. I am your hostess of Cloud Unfiltered, where we talk all things cloud.

I'm joined today by my awesome cohost, Val, and somebody that's a little bit near and dear to my [foreign language 00:00:24], and I say that because Jeff and I did, I don't know how many podcast episodes we did, like 70 or something.

**Jeff Dickey:** A lot. Yep.

**Niki Acosta:** A lot. Over the course of a couple of years, and so it's really kind of neat. I haven't talked to you that much, Jeff. I haven't seen you that much, because I haven't been traveling. But introduce yourself.

**Jeff Dickey:** Wait. Wait. I got to say first, this is weird. I'm a little jealous of Val.

**Val Benincosa:** I feel like I'm the new guest.

**Jeff Dickey:** Yeah. This is weird being a guest. I want to say, "Okay, Niki, please introduce our guest." That's me.

I'm Jeff Dickey. I did the OpenStack podcast with Niki for quite a while. We've got a lot of awesome episodes, and we had a lot of fun on the podcast, and traveling together, and doing the podcast live, and it was pretty fun.

I work for a company called [Redapt](#). We really focus on building out large scale infrastructure for some of the biggest players in the whole internet space. We do a lot of gaming companies, and big banks, and a lot web apps, gaming, you know, folks that are buying tens of thousands of servers at a time and need them in multiple locations around the globe, or building mini AWS footprints around the globe. We do that. And so, we've been involved in a tremendous amount of cloud installs globally for the last seven

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years, we've been doing it, so started early with the Cloud.com folks. They're now the Rancher folks. But Cloud.com, which turned into CloudStack, and still going, the community is still going, but it's really small. And then we got into OpenStack, and now we're pretty much all containers and kind of Kubernetes.

- Niki Acosta: Let's talk about that. We were talking a little bit on the pre-show prep call just about the [inaudible 00:02:18] cloud, and you and I both have been involved in OpenStack for a very long time, and we've seen this emergence of small companies and startups, and this explosion of this community, which is now kind of been consolidated back into, essentially, large companies. And so, we were talking about open source in general, but share your thoughts on OpenStack, sort of past, present and future.
- Jeff Dickey: OpenStack. Okay. And this is the unfiltered podcast, right?
- Niki Acosta: You are a guest, although I have to do a disclaimer that what is said here does not necessarily reflect the opinions of Cisco. Ding.
- Jeff Dickey: Ding. I always worry, because I don't want to be controversial, but I have thoughts that really are different from the community on this. OpenStack was a really interesting ride for us. I think we got in a little bit late on it. We weren't from the ground floor. We've worked with almost every partner. We got in early with Cloudscaling, with those folks before EMC bought them. We've been with a few companies that have been acquired, so you know, going through it, OpenStack was the hottest thing on the market. It took the mind share away from CloudStack, and CloudStack, we had deployed CloudStack a fifty, sixty thousand nodes, you know, hosts. That's pretty uncommon for typical cloud infrastructure these days, or any software. You know, it takes-
- Val Benincosa: Yeah. That sounds huge.
- Jeff Dickey: It's quite a bit of effort to get 60,000 nodes in OpenStack. We made that transition into the OpenStack realm, working with those partners. We've worked with, gosh, so many.
- Niki Acosta: [Rackspace](#) is how I met you.
- Jeff Dickey: We had Rackspace. We actually built out the Rackspace cloud, their cluster of 2,000 nodes for OpenStack. Just recently, we've built out a lot of clouds. We partner with Mirantis on building their unlocked appliance, so we did all the hardware, and we deployed that to a bunch of locations.
- It's interesting, thinking back to what has worked and what hasn't worked. OpenStack is so complex, and we were talking earlier about, on the podcast, we've asked the question about, is OpenStack too open? And all of our guests who were really prominent in the community would always say, "No. It's not too open." They liked the fact that it was open, and I think that's what really has hurt OpenStack the most in the end, is being all inclusive. It was like, "How do you want to do it?" It's asking the user the question. We don't care. Just, you do it how you want to do it. We'll support anything.
- Niki Acosta: We can.
- Jeff Dickey: Yeah. You want to run this from any sort of configuration you want. We'll try to support that. And I just think that's wrong. I think there should have been a core. The DefCore and all that should have been more of a priority in the community. We should have got the core working first and then expanded. It should have been rock solid. You look at the years spent in OpenStack. We're not five years behind public cloud. We're like 15 years, because with that acceleration the public cloud has, it's really discouraging to see how far behind we are in the private infrastructure space, which is definitely necessary

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today. There are reasons. There are use cases, and there's still so much legacy infrastructure out there that can't just be moved to cloud native. We've got a customer that has 35,000 custom apps. We're not just going to rewrite them, and they're not going to say, "Okay. Next year we're going to rewrite 35,000 apps and make them cloud native, and we're going to go on public cloud." These are very sophisticated, crazy apps that need to be pulled along the cloud journey, not rewritten.

You know, OpenStack was tough. I think there was a lot of struggle in trying to include everyone and not have guardrails. There should have been rings. There should have been, here's how it works. Here's another ring. Here's some more features and stuff, and services that will work. And then there's the outer ring, which is like anyone and everyone. But yeah, that was tough.

Niki Acosta: [crosstalk 00:07:07] just because of a) the sheer number of companies that were participating, and b) the number of, I'll say hardware vendors that were participating. It seemed like, as far as the core went, depending on where you worked, there was a different definition of what core shape looked like to begin with.

Jeff Dickey: Yeah. I mean, look, it was a losing battle, because you're the hottest thing in the world, and you have every big company trying to profit off of their own IP on it. It was a losing battle from the beginning. I applaud the Foundation. They've done an incredible job for how they've done it and what they've done, considering they're playing with giants. They're doing some crazy work.

I offended someone, a CEO of a OpenStack partner of ours in Tokyo, because ... Oh, I'm going to get so much crap for this, but-

Niki Acosta: Unfiltered, Jeff. Unfiltered.

Val Benincosa: Just say it, Jeff. We want to hear it.

Jeff Dickey: Well, I was making a joke. He came up to me, and he was like, "Oh, how much revenue have you guys brought in with OpenStack this year?"

And I looked at him, and I said, "No one makes money on OpenStack. The Foundation is the only company that makes money off OpenStack."

And he just got this ghost face and walked off. It really offended him, because his business is based on OpenStack.

Again, even that's no dig on the Foundation. They've done a great job in pulling this along. This is an impossible task. An impossible task. They have basically huddled the entire tech company under this umbrella and have made that work. Now, it does work, but again, you have to work the way OpenStack works and not push those boundaries.

Niki Acosta: You think that people underestimate the amount of effort that it takes to make it work the way they want it to work?

Jeff Dickey: Yes. Absolutely, and we challenge people all the time on requirements. It's like, "Well, we want it to do this. We want it to do this." And a lot of the folks are infrastructure folks where it's like, "Well, do your devs want that?" You got to think about the customer and what they want, and how they want to consume it. And some of the new bells and whistles that come out, you know, every six months are not necessary. We have to go in like, "Okay, do you need this, or do you want this? Because I want it. I want it too, but do you need it? Do your developers even know it exists?"

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Val Benincosa: Does it even help the end users that are consuming you, right?

Jeff Dickey: It doesn't. It doesn't. And I think what we got caught up in, in the OpenStack industry, or the OpenStack community, is we got caught up in who can build this, how we build it, how big it gets, what's our footprint, like, I'm doing this big OpenStack thing, and I think it got kind of out of control where we lost sight of what the purpose of this was, is to fuel innovation on top of OpenStack.

It was supposed to be a platform for development, and I think another thing that was tough was the marketing around OpenStack. We talked to CIOs about, "Why do you want OpenStack?" Because we would flesh this out. We would really want to make sure that they understood what they were getting into, because of the complexity of OpenStack, because it's hard to be an expert when there's so many pieces. We work with some companies that have an enormous team supporting their OpenStack footprint. But it was, the marketing fluff around that was, "It's open source, which means its free," and that was kind of a requirement, and the fact that they, you know, "There's no vendor lock-in. You don't want vendor lock-in. Vendor lock-in is bad." I really question that, because I did, I'd drink the Koolaid, and I pitched that. "You don't want vendor lock-in. That's horrible."

That's what keeps things humming though. The vendor is your lifeline. It's your insurance policy. You really do, in the end, when you're running business critical apps that are making revenue for the company that are paying your salary, you need that parachute. You want that to be supported. I just got a car recently, and I can't imagine not getting the warranty, not having auto insurance, and it's like, why on earth would I want to build a Franken-car and get parts from every random place, and batteries, and all this stuff, and build it, and yeah, it could be the coolest car ever, but when it breaks, there's no one [crosstalk 00:12:10].

Niki Acosta: Well, there's something to be said about speed, too, right? You want it done fast, because you can't be without a car.

Jeff Dickey: Well, and you're competing with public cloud, which is a credit card away, so we worked on these OpenStack that would take sometimes a year and a half, a lot of them. There's some that have been going on for years, but they're just kind of trying to tape together, but in a year and a half, you're not a year and a half behind. You're like five years behind.

Niki Acosta: Now, you say that, Jeff, but you and I know, and Val to some extent you know too, that there are a large number of companies out there that haven't even really gotten to a point where they feel comfortable with cloud. You know, for a policy perspective, or culture perspective, or usability perspective. We've been in cloud for a long time, collectively, we. It seems like we're behind, but then you look at some of the users of this stuff, and you realize that they're really behind.

Jeff Dickey: They're behind, but that's a dangerous spot, because their competition is on the cloud, and they're building products, they're building features, they have a CI/CD process. They are going to have things out in a rapid sequence, when the other company, I mean, you're not using cloud. We talk about cloud, and cloud's not a place, right? Cloud's the model. You need that so that you can have that agility, so you can innovate on top it. Buzzword insert. Insert all the buzzwords here.

Niki Acosta: Hashtag devops.

Jeff Dickey: Hashtag. Yes.

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Yeah, so you know, the no-vendor lock-in is kind of crap. You look at mainframes. Mainframe's one of the best places to run Windows and Linux, and it just works. I mean, we're all trying to get back to the mainframe days but in a cheaper fashion. I think there's something to be said about having one throat to choke and not having, you know, 20 vendors pointing at each other, 20 different team pointing at each other, 100 different people. If you're a CIO or CTO and you have these responsibilities, you really have to be looking at, "What is easy?" "What is simple?" Because, the other thing I talk about with our prospective customers is, today is the least complex day we will ever have in technology. Like, today. Today is it. Tomorrow, more complex. The next day, more complex.

And if there are people that think, "Well, cloud is taking away some of my responsibilities. It's making things easier." It's not. It's changing the model. It is becoming more complex. When you dig in deep, there are more things to think about. There are more considerations. There are new ways to do things and new things that are coming out, so we really got to challenge ourselves to start learning it, be open minded, start looking at these technologies not as a replacement to our skills but as to really need our skills even more, but it needs our skills in a different way. We've got to adapt.

Val Benincosa: Hey, so you talked about a couple of things that could have been different such as, OpenStack could have focused more on the core. Maybe we could have talked less about the vendor lock-in stuff. What are some other things we could have done better as a community with OpenStack, or just the community in general, to make things better and maybe be more ahead today than where OpenStack is today?

Jeff Dickey: I mean, I don't know. That is a great question, because you've gobbled up all the innovative companies.

Niki Acosta: How about, let me rephrase this another way. Does open source work? Do you [inaudible 00:16:12] believe the open source is sustainable?

Val Benincosa: [crosstalk 00:16:15]

Jeff Dickey: No. I personally, and I'll get a lot of crap for this, I don't believe open source is good business model at all. I would not invest my money in an open source business model company.

Val Benincosa: Like [Red Hat](#)?

Jeff Dickey: Okay. Red Hat's the only one. They have no other. There is Red Hat, and that is it. I guess you could argue by SQL, but that [inaudible 00:16:40] by Oracle, and it is Red Hat, and that model has become very, very popular.

Now, I do support open source, and I do support proprietary technologies that use open source as their core technologies. Let it be out there. Let people use it. It should be easily consumable, and you should be able to look at the code, but then the stuff that is production ready and the secret sauce behind the business, and the thing that keeps the business running, because again, us IT folks, we don't want to pay our vendors, right? Like, "I'm not paying you for that. I could write that. I could do that." You want your vendors to be in business so they can support you. It's an ecosystem. You make money, and part of that is spending money on other people, and those people help you make more money.

Niki Acosta: But is the model changing away from that and more towards looking at a customer not as someone who buys from me multiple millions of dollars worth of stuff every few

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years, but rather a company that provides me with a service that I pay for over the course of that product or service's lifetime? The subscription model, moving the subscription model, like I'm starting to look at my bills, and what was it the other day. I was trying to buy something. Oh, no. My sister posted. My twin was like, "Hey. Does anyone have an Adobe CS6 disc?" And I was like, "Dude, that ish is in the cloud now." And she was like, "What?" I'm like, "I don't think you can run that anymore." And she was like, "well, yeah I can, because I'm still running OS Sierra." And I was like, "Wait? What? What?" And I thought about that, and I was like, that was pretty genius on Adobe's part to go to a subscription model.

Jeff Dickey: And they had a lot of backlash.

Niki Acosta: And I've used it, and I think it's great, and they've got a lot of backlash, but people don't blink an eye. And I'm looking at my credit card statements, and there's stuff that my kid has subscribed to on my iPad, which is now password protected, and he's completely locked out. I have to change my password every six days, or whatever. But I'm starting to think about all these things, so I looked at my credit card, and I could not believe how many recurring monthly fees I have. And some of them are small, like for Google Store, you have to pay \$2.11, or whatever, to back up all my photos. That's not a lot of money, and I'm happy to pay it knowing that there's peace of mind in the cloud, but the days of me going and buying the CD and paying \$100 or \$200 for a piece of software, even studio software for the music individual, people are starting to look at buying a subscription and expecting that the software gets better and better over time.

Jeff Dickey: Yeah, and this subscription model, excuse me, it's brilliant, it's easier to consume, but it is more expensive.

Val Benincosa: It is, yeah.

Niki Acosta: It is more expensive, but also, expensive for who? Because the argument, and I've talked to a few companies about this, the argument is, if you sell software, you sell service, and you can make that easily orderable, then you don't have the overhead of paying for sales people or all these other things. If you can go online and click and order something, like Walmart has got to keep all the lights on. They've got big buildings and property taxes and all this other stuff. No wonder they're pushing their online business.

Jeff Dickey: We're taking the risk out of it. And that's a good point to go back to OpenStack. It is very complex. It is a risk to take on. You need really skilled people to build it and to operate it, and it's harder to operate than it is to build. There is a great product from Cisco that lets you dip your toes into it and a monthly rate. You don't have to risk buying a couple of million of dollars worth of racks, you know, a couple racks, or paying the upfront license fees from other competition, because OpenStack is not free.

I'll tell you that OpenStack is not free. And you can dip your toes in and giving the developers what they want, which is, the developers do. They want that kind of infrastructure as code. They want the API access, and you definitely have stuff laying around, like it's not a hard, difficult task, and it's the best way.

You didn't race the Tour de France as Greg LeMond when you were five learning to ride a bike, right? You had training wheels. That's what we need. We have to have that. And then learn what you like. Learn what you don't like. And run the trunk in your labs, and get to know it, and do that, and see how you like it, and see what the differences are, but in production you want that single throat to choke, and you want to make your customers happy, which the customers are your consumers of the cloud.

Niki Acosta: Are you talking [Cisco Metacloud](#), just for clarification's sake and for transcript purposes?

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Jeff Dickey: Oh, yes. Yeah, for transcript, oh yes. Yes. Was that a commercial?

Val Benincosa: Hey, Jeff. I got a question, Jeff. Going forward, what's the future of OpenStack? Everybody is talking about Kubernetes now, and does that displace it? What do you think happens going forward?

Jeff Dickey: Well, the thing that no one saw was the container movement that came out of nowhere and become so popular, and again, because it just, what you run on your laptop-

Niki Acosta: Wait. Wait. Wait. Wait. Wait. Wait. Wait. Wait. Time out. Popular to who? Because-

Jeff Dickey: Developers.

Niki Acosta: Right. Popular for developers.

Jeff Dickey: But it's popular for operations folks, too, because-

Niki Acosta: Of small or medium-sized companies, or for larger companies that either build a software product or are doing containerized networking, or something like that, but are we seeing massive container use in the enterprise space?

Jeff Dickey: Yes.

Niki Acosta: You are?

Jeff Dickey: Yes, but okay, asterisks, they're not in production. Everyone is using containers. Everyone is using them. They're in development. They are in labs. They are in staging stuff. The production stuff-

Niki Acosta: Are you finding them in individual BUs, or in IT umbrella, [crosstalk 00:23:09] IT?

Jeff Dickey: Both. Definitely both. Both, and then even on the kind of rogue business units that are AWS. I mean, they're using containers there too, but the stuff we're seeing in production is small. I mean, it's small for us. And some of the folks that we see speak, and I always like drilling down into folks in the production side, because they'll speak at a Kubernetes conference about what they're doing, and it sounds great, and they're a big company, right? And when you get down into the weeds, they're like, "Well, this is a 20-server project."

Val Benincosa: [crosstalk 00:23:44] test.

Jeff Dickey: Yeah, that's, you know, we're-

Val Benincosa: Even though they're like a large financial bank that is being touted using it.

Jeff Dickey: Yeah. They're doing something. [crosstalk 00:23:52]

Niki Acosta: You know what Tim Crawford said on a recent podcast. He was like, "Look, number one. Stop targeting the CIO, and number two, let's just give people a minute. Let's give people a minute to get comfortable with these technologies before we're blazing off to the next thing, because people are falling behind." Do you agree with that?

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Jeff Dickey: It goes back to my statement of, today is the least complex day we'll ever have. It's not going to slow down.

Val Benincosa: Right.

Jeff Dickey: It's going to change. There could be a new whatever type of virtualization. Maybe there's apps virtualization that kind of hits us out of nowhere, like it's just putting an IP stack onto whatever app you have, right? We don't know what's going to come out of left field and disrupt the container space, but right now it is early.

Niki Acosta: Or, like what political things exist, like net neutrality. That's going to be a big deal, you know? That's going to fundamentally change the way people think about service providers. It could, potentially.

Jeff Dickey: Sure.

Niki Acosta: Are we going to see an emergence of a different type of service grid that's not similar to anything we have today?

Jeff Dickey: Yep. You know what the nice thing is, though? What I like about regulations, and different laws, and anything that suppresses what you can do, fuels a crazy amount of innovation. People will figure out ways around this. They do more, right?

Niki Acosta: Loopholes.

Val Benincosa: Absolutely, yeah.

Jeff Dickey: You're putting up guardrails, and then you find these crazy things. Companies are going to pop up that do really cool things and blow it away. It's almost like, you almost want less regulation and keep things the norm, and that would be simple, but-

Niki Acosta: Look, I think what you say is a huge reason why AWS has been successful. They said, "Here's what we offer, and this is what we offer," and people were like, "Oh, what about this? What about that?" And engineers found ways to engineer around it.

Jeff Dickey: Yeah.

Val Benincosa: Yeah.

Niki Acosta: And in turn, AWS said, "Who are all those people being really successful and what kind of business are they in? Oh, we should build that feature set. We should do that and offer it." Their customer base is the best beta-ground they have.

Jeff Dickey: Sure. Yeah, they know who's using what for sure.

Val Benincosa: What happens going forward with Kubernetes? I mean, does it take over, and people no longer go to OpenStack conferences and just go to KubCon and stuff like that, or I don't know, DockerCon was just, was it last week, and ...

Jeff Dickey: Yeah, in Austin.

Niki Acosta: In Austin.



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Jeff Dickey: Yeah. I don't know. I mean, it definitely feels, Kubernetes feels like early OpenStack. It's got the momentum. What's interesting, too, it's smaller startups that, the ecosystem is not really made up of the giants, and they're not trying to go in and get control. I think they're still licking their wounds from OpenStack, so they're not all in.

Niki Acosta: Is that a nature of where Kubernetes came out of?

Jeff Dickey: Kubernetes is built to fuel GCP consumption.

Val Benincosa: Yeah.

Niki Acosta: Great.

Jeff Dickey: Which is-

Val Benincosa: No doubt about that, yeah. No doubt about that.

Niki Acosta: So do you think people looked at it as, "Oh, you know. That's Google's thing. We're not going to use Google's thing, because we compete with Google."

Jeff Dickey: Yeah, I don't know. I mean, it almost doesn't matter, because the momentum is there. It's what the developers are using, and it's like, OpenStack was trying to service the developers without including them, and Kubernetes is all about the developer, is all about giving the developer access to their pod and having that control.

Niki Acosta: What is the balance that a company has to take, to balance security, and policy, and all of these enterprise things that all large companies have to deal with to, most likely, reduce their risk with speed and agility and a developer who says, "I got to go fast." What's that balance, and is it something that can be solved by technology? Because we ask every single guest on the podcast, "What do you have to do to be successful with cloud? Is it more of a culture thing that you have to embrace, or is it a technology thing?" And they all said, "Oh, by far, it's the cultural thing."

You know, it makes me wonder, are we going to see all of the open source projects come back together, and there's just going to be an open source thing and then all these other things? I don't know. I think open source is a great model. It gives people capabilities that they may have not had otherwise. I think having open API is, at the very least, like if you're not going to integrate with other things, then I think you're dead in the water.

But what are companies going to have to do to be able to follow all of the policy and security requirements that they have, but also have this super agile fast cloud thing, or are those things always going to be at odds?

Jeff Dickey: No, and I think it goes back to the vendor lock-in. I think there's going to be a change. All of these startup companies have come about because the big players were slow. Cisco was slow, Dell, HP, I mean, all the giants, IBM, were not filling these gaps. They were not moving fast enough, but you know what? They've caught up. Cisco's caught up. The giants have taken a long time. They've taken eight years, and they've caught up.

I think there was a jump into OpenStack, because everyone missed the virtualization wave. They thought that was it. But really, containers is the next version of virtualization, right? It's operating system level. I think there's going to be a swing back to going all in, like Cisco has a lot of offerings around this. We are going to make

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business decisions out of this. We want to go with this route. There's going to be more of a platform play. They're going to say, "Okay, I'm going to go all in on Cisco. I'm going to go all in on HP." Hopefully, it's all in on Cisco, right?

I think it's going to be more about vendor management, because again, you go to AWS, the customers that we work with and build apps for that are on AWS, it's soup to nuts. When they're all on AWS, it's one bill for support, for everything, for consumption, all of that. It's a complex bill to read, but it's one bill. I think we're going to get vendor fatigue. I think we're going to have that billing fatigue. I think it's going to swing back to more, you know, we've swung pretty far out onto the open source piece, and I think it's going to back in proprietary in a way. And there are even new startups-

Niki Acosta: And [crosstalk 00:30:50]

Jeff Dickey: ... coming out that are saying, "No. We're proprietary software."

Niki Acosta: And you think this is where [Kubernetes](#) has a play or not?

Jeff Dickey: Oh, well, Kubernetes has a real shot, because again, they're proscribed about the way and how it works and how to implement it. It's not trying to be as inclusive. It's got Google engineers behind it pretty hard, you know, developing against it, and you've got some of the best and brightest people. Again, same with OpenStack. I know a lot of OpenStack folks that have moved over to developing Kubernetes. And it's moving really fast. It's moving really fast. You've got so much integration, now, with Red Hat and with CoreOS, and there's a lot of people doing it.

We've got a customer, Packet.net, they've got some great stuff around that. It definitely is the future as of right now. It's where people want to be and where they're going, but again, I actually, I ran into a good buddy at half-price whiskey night at one of my favorite bars.

Niki Acosta: Of course you did.

Jeff Dickey: The only thing that's not half off is the Pappy Van Winkle-

Niki Acosta: Damn it!

Jeff Dickey: But everything's half off. And so, I ran into a buddy, and it was really a conversation, because he was like, "Look, I've been just dabbling with containers, and what do I do?" And he's a developer, but he's got his whole org about, he's got full control of what he does. He can do whatever he wants. He can go all public, but he wants to be private, because they've got to be in region at a bunch of places, which Amazon can't do. And he's like, "Well, what do I do," and it was a really interesting question, because most prospects and customers don't actually ask me what I would do. They are telling me what they're going to do and what kind of a yes or no thing.

But it was a really strange question. It was like, "What would you do?" And I'm like, "Well, that's really tough," because it's, yes, containers are it, but it's still early. It's still early from, you're putting your business on this. Yes, get it in the labs. Get your developers working on it. Get the CI/CD process going around containers. But it was kind of funny. I talked to him about, again, you want something solid, infrastructure as code, and you guys definitely came up as an option for that. It's like, look, do you want to be in operations? Do you want to get calls? Do you want to be in operations? That's where, you'd want Cisco managing your OpenStack. Right? You want guardrails.

Niki Acosta: Unless you're an operations person, and you don't want to lose your job.

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Jeff Dickey: But again, there's more complexities on top of OpenStack.

Niki Acosta: Exactly. You still need an administrator. You still need-

Jeff Dickey: [crosstalk 00:33:51] just shifts a little bit. It's just moving over.

Niki Acosta: ... someone to coordinate.

Jeff Dickey: Yeah. It's not getting rid of, then again, when I talk to CIOs or any other leadership, and they're saying, "Well, we're going to do this, because it's going to ... You know, I'd love to reduce headcount." And it's like, "No. No. You're thinking about this completely wrong. Right now, it's about you're trying to out-innovate your competition, and a reduction in staff, and a reduction in how you're moving faster. You think you want to spend less and have less talent, and you're going to move faster? Where do we do that? In what area of life do we do that?"

Niki Acosta: But they probably just think that, "We'll cut some [inaudible 00:34:35] folks, because someone else will do that, and we'll just hire more unicorn developers."

Jeff Dickey: Yeah. Okay. Yeah.

Niki Acosta: I hear that.

Jeff Dickey: Yeah. And absolutely, if you can get them out of their half-million dollar package at Google, you can have them.

Niki Acosta: Good luck with that, I say.

Let's go to the container space real quick. Are you doing the container podcast?

Jeff Dickey: I'm launching it.

Niki Acosta: You're launching it. Okay.

Jeff Dickey: It's coming out the 15th, yeah.

Niki Acosta: The 15th of ...

Jeff Dickey: May.

Niki Acosta: May. Awesome.

Val Benincosa: Oh, very cool.

Niki Acosta: You've been following containers for quite some time. Who's winning in the container space?

Jeff Dickey: We're doing a lot of stuff with [Rancher](#) and [Joyent](#).

Val Benincosa: Mm.

Niki Acosta: Do you think that's by virtue of your customer base, or do you think that's by virtue of-

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Jeff Dickey: Yeah.

Niki Acosta: Where you're located, or do you think it's just ...

Jeff Dickey: Yeah. I think it's our customer base. But I'll tell you who's not winning.

Niki Acosta: Who?

Jeff Dickey: [Docker](#).

Niki Acosta: Docker's not winning? Like, not winning as a company or not winning as a technology?

Jeff Dickey: It worries me, because I'm not seeing Docker swarm as much as I should be seeing it.

Val Benincosa: Yeah, compared to Rancher and some of the other ones.

Jeff Dickey: Yeah. Again, I guess Kubernetes and everything. We want Docker to succeed. We need them to succeed. It's a fantastic technology. We need some more adoption around that. And I don't know what it is. I just haven't dug into it. I'm sure the Docker folks know.

Niki Acosta: What's your personal favorite container tech?

Jeff Dickey: Again, very controversial. For just strictly, like, all I've got is containers and that's it, right?

Val Benincosa: Yeah.

Jeff Dickey: Uh, Joyent.

Val Benincosa: Hm.

Jeff Dickey: Triton. Triton from Joyent.

Val Benincosa: Right, yeah.

Jeff Dickey: Which, they do containers a little bit different. They come the kind of slayers background, and jails and all that, and they are the most secure option at the moment. So, if you're going in production ... But again, you could run containers on OpenStack.

Niki Acosta: Yeah.

Jeff Dickey: And you have a little more security if you're running them in VMs, and again, people are going to email me all over the place, but yeah, they've got a great thing. We have a lot of success around CoreOS and their Tectonic product.

Niki Acosta: Really smart group of people over there. I fricking love CoreOS.

Val Benincosa: Yeah.

Jeff Dickey: I had a conversation with somebody recently about how bad the technology industry has gotten in the last 20 years, like how much arrogance and the a-holeness nature of it, and especially in Silicon Valley.

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Niki Acosta: You know what. It's so funny you mention that, because I have a woman that's going to be on the podcast soon who wrote an article about that very thing that was in-

Jeff Dickey: Oh really? Okay.

Niki Acosta: I think it was in Fortune. I read it, and I was like, oh my gosh, is this for real?

Val Benincosa: Wow.

Niki Acosta: But I agree, and I don't know what's creating that. I don't know where that-

Jeff Dickey: It's gotten really bad, and that's why I love working with [CoreOS](#), because like-

Niki Acosta: Down to earth.

Jeff Dickey: [Paul V. 00:37:51] and Red Beard, I mean, these guys are, one, they will outsmart everyone, combined, out of the room, and they're so cool about it. They're so humble. They're so awesome.

Val Benincosa: They're so cool about the way they're outsmarting you.

Jeff Dickey: No, it's not about that.

Niki Acosta: They're not arrogance.

Jeff Dickey: They're not arrogant.

Val Benincosa: No, no. I got it.

Jeff Dickey: Yeah, it's not about that. They are-

Val Benincosa: That's very cool.

Niki Acosta: Yeah.

Jeff Dickey: And it says something about the culture there, and again, culture is top down, so I have a lot of respect for Alex and what he's done there and what they've built.

Niki Acosta: I ran into Alex's old professor, a leader of the Oregon State Open Source group.

Jeff Dickey: Oh, yeah.

Niki Acosta: Yeah. Older guy, super cool, and I was like, "Yeah, you're org? Oh cool. You know, Alex Paul." He's like, "Oh, yeah." And he was just the nicest, brilliantest, most humble guy, and I could see why a lot of people that have come out of that program, in particular, have risen through the ranks of tech. It's pretty fascinating. But I don't know. I get so mad when I see a company like Uber that has just crushed it from a business point of view, but you've got videos of a CEO telling off one of your drivers, like, who does that? Is it the influx and the opportunity and the money? I guess maybe it's the opportunity that creates these sort of attitudes.

Jeff Dickey: I don't know. I use Lyft.

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Val Benincosa: Maybe it's because people read about Steve Jobs, and they think that's the way you're supposed to act. I don't know.

Yeah, you know, it's funny about Docker. I remember DockerCon, one [inaudible 00:39:31] the CEO standing up there, and it's like, "You know, we have all this great technology. There must be some way to make money off of it." I remember that was like his whole conundrum.

Jeff Dickey: No, they do. It's a hard problem to figure out, but they need to do it. They got to figure it out.

Val Benincosa: Yeah.

Niki Acosta: What about platform as a service, Jeff? What do you see there?

Jeff Dickey: You're talking about the PaaS stuff?

Niki Acosta: Yes.

Val Benincosa: Yeah.

Jeff Dickey: I mean, I'm seeing more and more [Pivotal](#).

Val Benincosa: Are you?

Jeff Dickey: Yeah. I'm saying that it's swinging back, where people kind of have this fatigue around some of this stuff, and they're going, "Well, we're compromising. This is not what we want to do, necessarily, but it's a safe bet. It works." And I encourage that. Put the new stuff in the labs. Get it ready. You should already have this stuff near production and be playing with it-

Niki Acosta: Always be learning.

Jeff Dickey: And learn how to operationalize it. Yes. It should always be there. It shouldn't be like, "Oh, we're four years into the container movement, and we're thinking about buying some gear to play with containers." No, you need to have that. You need to invest in labs. You can have labs teams. Again, they're going to be solving the problems you don't know you have or will have."

Niki Acosta: I feel like in that regard, you know the whole Phil Fast ... Wes [Josie 00:41:01], one of our podcast guests, said it. There's like this divide. It's like the companies founded before 2010 and companies founded after 2010. There's this sharp line where the companies before 2010 are looking at older types of infrastructure. Companies in 2010 don't have any of that old stuff, but they got all this new stuff, but now they're starting to need some of that old stuff, and so he calls that middle zone the Goldilocks zone. And so, you need this healthy mix but same thing, you got to keep it fresh and make sure that you have infrastructure that can support these newer technologies as they become introduced. And that's tough. I feel like no matter which way you go, you're going to be creating technical debt in some way, shape, or form.

Jeff Dickey: Yeah. And again, most of this stuff runs on [VMware](#). I tell folks too, if you're dipping your toes in, you know, VIO is great. Start it. Give access to your developers early. If you're not doing it now, again, you're two years late. Give them access to it, and while you're doing that, start building out your bare metal OpenStack build.

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Val Benincosa: Sure.

Jeff Dickey: You can go in multiple paths at the same time to get there faster.

Val Benincosa: Yeah, good point. And things like Kubernetes run just fine on VMware, right? I mean, you can just run it there if you want to get your feet wet.

Jeff Dickey: Get your feet wet, yeah, and then-

Niki Acosta: I think [crosstalk 00:42:22] anywhere, right?

Jeff Dickey: Yep, yep.

Niki Acosta: How do you address, you know, obviously if you got a lab, you got the technology piece, but how do you fix that culture piece? When you're talking to companies, and they're telling you, "I want to reduce head count," I mean, to me, that's a change management process conversation, and that to me is a little bit harder to fix.

Jeff Dickey: Yes. And that's the extent to our conversation, and I think what we've seen in the past too, and maybe I talked about this earlier about building clouds, building anti-clouds. If the business of IT has not changed and adapted to leverage and utilize cloud, cloud will not be used. You can't just throw technology at this problem, and that's what people have been doing for the last few years.

And we built clouds that I consider unsuccessful, because it worked perfect, but they didn't have any business units come onto it. It was like, "Well, we're building it to move people over," but the business units still, in some cases, own a lot of the stuff. And so, you need to get a sponsor in doing these projects. You need to get one, and then have two backups, and then have a workload ready. All these clouds we built, too, we'd always laugh, because we're like, "Okay, tell us about your workloads." "Oh, we don't know." "Well, then, what are you doing? What are you doing?"

Know your workloads. Know what's going on. Know these business units, what they need, and timeframes, and put it together. You want to get it consumed. But back to the culture piece, that's tough. We work a lot with Cloud TP. They're good at doing that, changing the business of IT, because again, you can't just, okay great, you've got chargeback now on your cloud. Well, no one knows how to build it. The business units, they just don't know. [crosstalk 00:44:22]

Niki Acosta: And it has an API. You're like, "Oh, what do I do with this API?"

Jeff Dickey: Yeah. Yeah. It's like going to your grandma and throwing iPhones in her face, like, just use it, right? Like, "Here. Here's an Android. Here's an iPhone. Here's another, an iPad." You're not giving her any instruction.

Niki Acosta: I know. I told my grandma, she was a computer user at work, and they had an attendant system that was built on mainframes with green screens and everything else. I gave her an iPad, because she really wanted to use the QVC app.

Jeff Dickey: Yeah. Oh yeah, good.

Niki Acosta: That's what she wanted to do. She was like, "I keep seeing this thing on QVC, and I want to try it." She gets the iPad, and I show her how to log in or whatever. She's like, "Okay, what do I do?" And I was like, "What do you think you should do? What are you trying to do? Just forget everything you know about the other computers you use and

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just do what makes sense." And I realized at that moment that what comes intuitive to a lot of people, especially people who are, I'll say, 40 or under, may not be as intuitive to people who are 45, or 50, or 55, or 60, with an increasing amount of complexity as you go up in age.

Val Benincosa: Yeah.

Jeff Dickey: Yeah.

Val Benincosa: And also, as people in the cloud space that have been in it for a while, we're seeing it. We're living this. And people who have not been in this mode, coming to it can be rather difficult and challenging.

Niki Acosta: Can you imagine coming into OpenStack right now, like as a new person into the community? To me, it might be a little bit overwhelming.

Jeff Dickey: No. I'd wouldn't know where to start. I'd probably find a podcast series and just start listening to it.

Niki Acosta: Nice, what you did there, Jeff.

Val Benincosa: Well, it looks like we'll have one to look forward to listening to on containers, so that should be pretty good. What's the URL for all that? Do you have that all set up yet?

Jeff Dickey: It's ContainerPod.fm.

Val Benincosa: ContainerPod.fm. Cool. And that'll start in May?

Jeff Dickey: Yeah, May 15th.

Val Benincosa: May 15th.

Jeff Dickey: And I'm starting out with the who's who of containers.

Val Benincosa: Nice.

Jeff Dickey: And then we'll start branching out and then hopefully, maybe Niki will join a few.

I think the last one I did, Niki, I don't think you were able to make it, and it was like, "Where's Niki?" Everyone was always, "where's Niki?"

Niki Acosta: Didn't we talk to some of the Kubernetes folks at one point? That was a really good episode.

Jeff Dickey: Yeah. We did. We did talk ... And you know what. I had some of the VIO from VMware, the OpenStack folks, some engineers in the office this week, and we're sitting down, and one of the guys was like, "Oh, by the way. You know, I'm a big fan of your podcast." And he's like, "Why did you never have VMware on there?" And I was like, "Honestly, the guest that we had on the podcast, Niki or I knew them." I was just like, "Look, it wasn't personal. I didn't know anyone at VMware. That's all."

Niki Acosta: Whoops.

Jeff Dickey: Yeah, sorry VMware.



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Niki Acosta: I know we've got Pivotal coming up on the show too, but if anyone has any suggestions for guests, let me know. We're trying to mix it up a bit, and it's always good to have people who have different opinions, and I can't imagine the storm that is going to come your way after some of the views that you've expressed here, but we're unfiltered, and that's okay. That's okay.

Jeff Dickey: Yeah. And again, I feel bad, because everyone that I've met at OpenStack Foundation, they're great people. I'm sorry. I don't mean to be so down on that. I was just, you know, [crosstalk 00:48:01] too controversial.

Niki Acosta: I think it's fair to say that the trough of disillusionment is real.

Jeff Dickey: Yeah, because Randy [Bias 00:48:08] used to do those great presentations about where we were, and yeah, he's been right on. I think he still writes on his blog.

Niki Acosta: I'm having on the guest, on this podcast.

Jeff Dickey: Oh good.

Niki Acosta: Yeah.

Jeff Dickey: He's awesome.

Niki Acosta: He's at Juniper now, I think.

Jeff Dickey: Yeah.

Niki Acosta: A lot of folks have moved around. But it's really fun. Are you going to be at the OpenStack Summit or Red Hat Summit?

Jeff Dickey: Nope.

Niki Acosta: No.

Jeff Dickey: I'm going to be at Dell EMC World speaking.

Niki Acosta: In Austin? Is that in Austin?

Jeff Dickey: In Vegas.

Niki Acosta: Vegas. It's in Vegas. Good times.

Well, where can we find you, Jeff?

Jeff Dickey: Twitter. I'm @JeffDickey, if you want to reach to me, and then, yeah, stay tuned to the ContainerPod.fm. You can find me there. Just at me on Twitter, and I'll get back to you.

Niki Acosta: Yay.

Val Benincosa: Awesome.

Niki Acosta: It's been real. It's been fun. I think this is the most-

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Jeff Dickey: It's been fun.

Niki Acosta: We've ever talked on a podcast that we've done.

Jeff Dickey: It is. It is. Because normally, I sit there quietly, and I'm polite, and you know, I don't get to express my feelings.

Val Benincosa: [crosstalk 00:49:15]

Niki Acosta: It was like therapy.

Jeff Dickey: Yeah.

Niki Acosta: I'll send you a bill in the mail.

Jeff Dickey: Another idea for you guys, cloud therapy.

Niki Acosta: You had an awesome idea for an app, and I want to talk to you about this app when we get off the podcast, and maybe I can have you back on the show here later this year, if this app becomes a real thing, because it needs to become a real thing.

Jeff Dickey: It does need to be a real thing, yeah.

Niki Acosta: It's brilliant, but I don't want to give it away. I don't know. It's a good one.

Anyway, well Jeff, it's been an honor and a pleasure. Val, an honor and a pleasure as always. And I hope to see you back later on this year and just let know what's going on.

Jeff Dickey: Can I say one thing before we go?

Niki Acosta: Yes.

Jeff Dickey: We have Metapod here, too. We've got it all installed, so if people do want to kick the tires and get that, we onboard customers all the time. It's a great way to, without having to dig up infrastructure from the IT garage.

Niki Acosta: We like working with you guys, because you guys get that gear in there, and you get it installed, and it's fast, and it's set up, and it's ready to go. Makes it easy for us.

Jeff Dickey: Absolutely. If anyone wants to demo it, I'm just putting it out there. We've got sample apps and everything, just kind of figure it out. Just want to put it out there.

Niki Acosta: And your cabling jobs are envious. I'm envious of the cabling jobs that you guys do every time I see the little box with the flashing light in it, I'm like, "Man, that's pretty."

Jeff Dickey: We had a big customer call it rack porn.

Niki Acosta: Rack porn. Yeah. Don't look under my desk right now. My feet are literally tangled in flipping cords at the moment.

Val Benincosa: That's funny. We used to call that cable porn, because it [crosstalk 00:51:01] done, yeah. But racks are more inclusive, so, very nice.

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Niki Acosta: Good times. Well, don't forget to subscribe to this podcast. Thank you again for joining us. This one went a little bit over, but we hope you enjoyed it. And we're heading to [Red Hat Summit](#), then [OpenStack Summit](#). Hope to see you guys out there. Don't forget to subscribe. Everybody say bye.

Jeff Dickey: Bye.

Val Benincosa: Bye. Thanks Jeff.

Jeff Dickey: Thank you.

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