

Cisco IT Deploys Unified Computing System

Platform combines compute, network, storage access, and virtualization capabilities.

Well before the Cisco Unified Computing System launched publicly in March 2009, Cisco IT had already begun deploying and testing the solution in production at one of its data centers in Northern California, together with the Nexus 7000 and 5000 Series switches. Several production and business-critical applications have been running on the Unified Computing System, including Cisco's news and media site.

"The fact that some very visible services migrated to the new environment first demonstrates Cisco IT's confidence in the power and quality of the Unified Computing System," says John Manville, vice president of IT, Network and Data Center Services at Cisco.

The production deployment of the Unified Computing System is a significant step toward the realization of Cisco's Global Data Center Strategy. The strategy's three-pronged approach will enable business growth and support business diversity for the next three to ten years by:

- Provisioning sufficient data center capacity and optimizing resource utilization through new technologies and processes
- Increasing resiliency by provisioning applications on a consolidated, virtualized infrastructure in purpose-built data centers
- Transforming how network, storage, compute, and data center services are managed and operated through automation

The cohesive Unified Computing System combines compute, network, storage access, and virtualization resources to reduce total cost of ownership and increase business agility. The system integrates a low-latency, lossless, 10-Gigabit Ethernet unified network fabric with x86-architecture servers into a multi-chassis platform in which all resources participate in a unified management domain. A single system scales up to 40 blade chassis, 320 compute nodes, and thousands of virtual machines.

"The Unified Computing System provides a tremendous amount of transformation, in the way that you can lay out and build a data center, but even more importantly, in addressing workload portability and application service. The new system opens the door to moving workloads from internal business functions into internal clouds and then to service provider clouds," says Mike Norman, IT director of Networking and Data Services Engineering at Cisco.

A dominant percentage of Cisco's production business applications is suitable for an x86-based virtualized environment.

"Moving forward, Unified Computing System will be our primary platform in the computing environment," says Manville.

"The launch of the Unified Computing System is an exciting milestone in executing Cisco's global data center strategy," adds Manville. "Innovative technologies, such as the Unified Computing System, will bring significant savings in the data center and go a long way toward simplifying operations. Unified computing is transformational for us and will enable IT to reap the full benefits of data center virtualization."

For more on the Unified Computing System and Cisco IT's deployment, see the Cisco broadcast Q&A with John Manville and Chris Hynes, director of IS, Network and Data Center Services:

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