

Abiquo's cloud stack reaches V2 maturity; seeks series C funding for go-to-market push

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Abiquo has announced version 2.0 of its cloud-enablement stack. If the earlier 1.x releases have effectively been used to determine what customers want, then the focus for the 2.0 release cycle is to make these customers successful, the company says. It now claims more than 40 customers.

The 451 take

In Abiquo 2.0, the company has significantly enhanced its metering and chargeback capability. For enterprises, the key to these functions is the ability for the CIO to use them to create an invoice for IT that can be charged to the lines of business – or to use some other existing service. However, more important than the functional aspects will be the readiness of the business to pay for resource usage in this way – per use. Abiquo believes the feedback from its customers says this is now the case. Its business seems to be moving ahead nicely, especially in the enterprise space, and it's seeking a series C to develop its go-to-market strategy.

Abiquo 2.0 features a slew of enhancements. These include:

- Integration with **Opscode** Chef enables Chef recipes to be presented to the Abiquo GUI, which passes the selected machine configuration to the Chef server to meet a user's exact requirements.
- A customizable end user portal allows customers to create subsets of users with a deployment portal customized to their needs. This includes virtual enterprises (tenants), virtual datacenters (sub-tenants) and virtual appliances (applications). It can also provide a basic service catalog. It supports an optional approvals workflow including full email integration for 'one click' management.
- In 2.0, each virtual machine image volume, and each of its attached data volumes, can now be self-provisioned on storage protocol-agnostic hypervisor data stores, or as persistent block-level storage in a fully managed tier model, supporting a range of storage devices.
- An unlimited number of pricing models can be supported by 2.0, each in any international currency and with any combination of individually defined resource, application and standing charges, which can also vary by storage tier and physical

datacenter. Previously, Abiquo's metering, billing and chargeback could only deal with 'units' rather than 'money.' Each tenant can be assigned to any defined pricing model. Pricing models can be used not only for chargeback and show-back, but also for 'show forward,' allowing users to determine the exact cost of each virtual appliance before it is deployed. The idea is to improve the ability to provide just-in-time provisioning.

- Version 2.0 is integrated with the **Jaspersoft** open source business intelligence platform.

Abiquo 2.0 supports multiple pre-defined external networks, allowing IP address pools to be shared among multiple virtual datacenters in an enterprise. The company says any private or external network can be used as the default for each virtual datacenter, providing automatic address assignment. It already provides automatic provisioning of isolated private networks and self-service provisioning of both additional private networks and public IP addresses.

Extended Hypervisor, NetApp and Cisco UCS support

Building on the industry's broadest hypervisor support, Abiquo 2.0 extends support for the newest editions emerging, including **VMware** vSphere 5 and **Citrix** XenServer 6. Additionally, Abiquo continues to enhance its enterprise support for Cisco UCS. In version 2.0, support is extended to include assignment of Service Profile templates to each blade in a UCS chassis, as well as power and location ID functions.

Support for physical as well as virtualized systems was of increased interest for the last six to nine months; although this appears to have faded somewhat, Abiquo reports. Nevertheless, it's reminding us that via API-level integration to Cisco UCS, Abiquo can simplify provisioning of new, or replacement of failed, blade servers by leveraging service profiles and templates. Additionally, its self-service allocation of storage resources has been extended to support NetApp Multistore-enabled storage systems.

Business

Although Abiquo appears to have become more of an enterprise play of late, the company argues that many of these are managed service providers whose customers are enterprises. When we last checked in with Abiquo in July, it had some 20 service-provider and a dozen enterprise customers, with deal sizes starting at \$25,000. It claims to have added 10 new customers last quarter – mostly enterprises, though it has a couple of large service providers nearly ready to announce Abiquo-powered cloud services, it claims. Most of its end users – including the larger service providers – have VMware and their production hypervisor. A few are moving off due to cost, but all have at least one hypervisor, with XEN or KVM being the alternates. It will support **OpenStack** when it has matured more. Of course, one of Abiquo's big plays is that tenants can move between hypervisors using its conversion capabilities – and IT is not required, it claims.

Abiquo says average sale prices on new deals is now north of \$100,000, which we suspect puts its revenue at several million but less than \$10m. It claims five successive quarters of

growth. Having raised \$11.5m in two rounds (including some angel funding) – mostly devoted to product and operations development (it recently opened in Australia) – Abiquo is now seeking a \$10m C round to drive its go-to-market push.

Competition

Abiquo believes its key differentiator is being able to address multiple groups of stakeholders – all of the below – where other approaches only target single groups.

- Application development teams – giving the consumers the **Amazon** experience.
- IT operations – this is where **DynamicOps, BMC, HP** and others play. These have typically come out of the workflow or runbook automation space. Abiquo argues these are typically very controlled by IT and limit what consumers do. They also put barriers into the user's way in terms of approval processes.
- CIOs and CFOs. CIOs are scared to death about where data is in the cloud, while the CFO is wondering how the cloud is going to save money (if, for example, the cost of virtualization proved as expensive as the savings).

Apart from the Big Four of **BMC, CA Technologies, HP** and **IBM**, competitors include Citrix Systems CloudStack, **Eucalyptus, Nimbula, Enomaly, Joyent, Hexagrid, Yunteq, CA 3tera, Convirture, ElasticHosts, Flexiant, cPanel, Zimory, Morph Labs, OnApp, Parallels, Red Hat, Virtustream** and VMware.

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