

# 10 START-UPS TO WATCH IN 2010

Virtualization security, cloud storage  
among focus areas

BY JON BRODKIN

**The rough economy** has squeezed funding for IT industry start-ups, but plenty of newcomers have toughed things out. These 10 companies to watch are tackling pressing problems related to virtualization, the cloud, smartphones, network management, security and power and cooling.

Virtualization is sure to be one of the most closely watched information technologies in 2010, as enterprises look to adopt the technology effectively and securely. A company to watch called **HyTrust** is focusing on the security portion with an appliance that takes the control mechanisms of the physical world and applies them to virtual infrastructure.

Virtualization is becoming ever more popular, but with success comes a form of unwanted attention — from hackers eager to exploit the vulnerabilities of hypervisors, says Forrester Research analyst James Staten. Hypervisors have not yet become a central point of attack but Staten expects them to become a big target in the next year.

“As we’ve seen with other technologies, when they get to the point where they’re almost ubiquitous in the market is when hackers go after them,” Staten says.

HyTrust founders believed that security was not getting the proper attention in virtualized data centers and built an appliance that provides a centralized point

of control “for virtual infrastructure access, policy management, security configuration and compliance,” the company says. Burton Group analyst Chris Wolf says many VMware customers are struggling with authentication in ESX, but HyTrust solves that problem with more granular auditing and security controls at the hypervisor layer.

HyTrust won “Best of Show,” the top award at VMworld this year, with judges deciding the HyTrust appliance offers “the greatest potential to secure virtual environments by providing a single point of access control” and frees admins to set policies once that won’t be overridden by other tools.

Beyond server virtualization, many enterprises are thinking about virtualizing their desktop infrastructure. A start-up called **Wanova** is hoping to catch on in this space with Distributed Desktop Virtualization (DDV) software, which provides centralized management by storing a primary copy of an operating system image in the data center, and a cached copy on endpoints to boost performance and provide offline

desktop use. The focus is on enterprises with many mobile and remote users.

Wolf believes Wanova “combines the best of a lot of worlds” in desktop virtualization — specifically the benefits of centralized management, including the ability to quickly provision new desktops, with an offline virtual desktop infrastructure experience delivered transparently to users. Wanova also requires fewer upfront hardware investments than many virtual desktop products, and allows 1,000 endpoints to be managed from a single IU server.

“I could see another major player in the desktop virtualization looking to [acquire] Wanova,” Wolf says. “I would put VMware, Quest Software, and possibly Microsoft in that group.”

In addition to virtualization, cloud computing will be a major focus for IT in the year ahead. The market is plagued by hype, but there are numerous vendors trying to bring real-world benefits to the enterprise.

One such player is **Zetta**, which has built a cloud storage service backed by a file system with snapshots, replication and other enterprise-class features. Zetta will have to compete against established players, most notably Amazon’s Simple Storage Service. But Zetta has experience, with CEO Jeff Treuhhaft, who was one of Netscape’s first employees; and vice president of engineering Lou Montulli, who invented Web cookies and was also an early Netscape employee.

Cloud storage can help enterprises grapple with ever-expanding data volumes, but many companies are concerned about the safety of trusting their information to

a third party. To help ease those concerns, Zetta has built a system that encrypts data at rest, and can withstand multiple hardware and network failures without losing data.

Another company looking to increase adoption of cloud services is **CloudSwitch**, which promises to move existing applications from internal data centers to public cloud platforms without re-creating the application or changing management tools.

“Using CloudSwitch, existing applications run securely in a public cloud while remaining tightly integrated with enterprise data center tools and policies, and are managed as if they were running locally,” CloudSwitch founder and Vice President Ellen Rubin explains. The CloudSwitch software appliance creates a secure data path between a company’s data center and its cloud vendor, while ensuring that applications in the cloud “operate with sufficient performance and reliability by automatically selecting the appropriate combination of processor, memory and storage,” she adds.

The idea of a “private” or “internal” cloud is gaining currency with some customers that want the flexibility and scalability of cloud services without the risk of placing data and applications into a public cloud. That’s where companies such as **Eucalyptus Systems** come in.

Eucalyptus is based on an open source platform that aggregates servers, storage and network infrastructure into a private cloud that allows self-service provisioning of computing resources. Eucalyptus is compatible with Amazon’s Elastic Compute Cloud, providing an easy bridge between internal and external cloud resources.

Eucalyptus is a promising company, Staten says, but will have trouble competing against VMware, which is positioning itself as a private cloud vendor and has gained widespread adoption of its hypervisor. But open source software could help ensure compatibility with multiple cloud platforms, he notes.

“It’s absolutely something customers need,” Staten says. “The question is will they want an open source solution for this.”

As if CIOs didn’t have enough to think about with virtualization, IT security and the cloud, there are also growing concerns about how best to manage iPhones, BlackBerries and other mobile devices.

“A lot of companies are finding mobile harder to manage than laptops,” says Ojas Rege, vice president of products for **MobileIron**, another company to watch. “All of this data that used to be on the laptop

is now on the smartphone. A lot of it is driven by the end user, people bringing phones into the enterprise. IT doesn’t have much visibility into what’s on the phone and how they’re being used.”

**MobileIron’s Virtual Smartphone Platform** provides IT visibility into mobile devices and their data by creating and storing phone clones — mirror images of a smartphone’s content, activities and applications. The system helps enterprises identify spikes in usage and thus control costs, and remotely wipes sensitive data without deleting a user’s personal applications.

The visibility problem MobileIron is targeting “really hasn’t gotten enough attention,” because there haven’t been major data breaches related to mobile phones the way there have been with laptops, says Gartner analyst Michael King. But as the amount of company data stored on smartphones grows, “the importance of these devices and the associated risks is going up as well,” he says.

Another key mobile issue is how to take advantage of the unique capabilities of Apple’s iPhone. One company to watch in this space is **MeLLmo**, whose Roambi technology takes business intelligence data and transforms it into interactive visualizations for the iPhone.

Viewing a big spreadsheet on a smartphone is tedious, so Roambi takes spreadsheet data and makes it easier to understand and navigate. “Instead of seeing raw numbers for quarters of sales data, you can see bar graphs that show relative growth or decline, click to see in graph form the trends for one or several sales representatives, and so on,” *Network World’s* John Cox reports.

Users can view trends in interactive pie charts that take advantage of the iPhone’s touch capabilities — simply click on a pie chart segment to display associated data.

Network World’s Mark Gibbs raves about Roambi, saying the spreadsheet display tool “makes the process of publishing your data painless and creates a dynamic presentation on the iPhone that is simply gorgeous.”

Our final three companies to watch tackle three of the core issues facing IT shops today: Web security, network management, and energy use.

On the Web security front, a team of ex-Google employees are behind **Dasient**, which is tackling the problem of legitimate

Web sites infected with malicious code.

“Our monitoring service regularly scans Web sites, looking for Web-based malware infections such as malicious JavaScript or iFrames,” the company explains. “If our monitoring technology discovers an infection, we send an alert with detailed diagnostic information — including which pages of the site have been compromised and the specific attack strings that have been injected — to the Webmaster.”

The Dasient co-founders include Neil Daswani, previously Google’s security product manager, and software engineer Shariq Rizvi. The management team was spurred to start Dasient to help legitimate Web sites avoid infecting their users and getting blacklisted by search engines and browsers.

On the network management front, a software-as-a-service company called **Vineyard Networks** uses SaaS (as well as an on-site version) to simplify the monitoring and reporting on performance of network devices, WAN connections and voice applications. Targeted at customers ill-equipped to take on a large management software deployment, Vineyard says its NetCore On Demand service helps small and midsize businesses answer the question “what’s on my network and how is it being used?”

NetCore can be set up within minutes,

and even people without a networking background can use the service to troubleshoot problems and monitor network usage and performance, says CEO and founder Jason Richards.

“Our product includes a small unmanaged probe, a SaaS service and a network-exploring interface on the customer site. We kept it very Fisher-Price style. If customers want to know more details

about something, they simply click on it and the data is there,” Richards explained to *Network World’s* Denise Dubie in September.

Our final company to watch, **Viridity Software**, is targeting power use in the data center with software that analyzes the energy consumption of IT equipment and applications. A shortage of power and cooling capacity has forced numerous companies to build new data centers, but Viridity says a new approach to energy monitoring can extend the life of existing facilities. ■

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