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Rackspace and CERN collaborate on massive OpenStack hybrid cloud

by Barb Darrow
JUL. 1, 2013 - 6:00 AM PDT

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SUMMARY: *CERN openlab is working with Rackspace to build and deploy a massive hybrid cloud that could prove OpenStack's worth in huge research applications.*

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CERN, the hotbed of physicists exploring the origin of, well of everything, was already using OpenStack for private cloud infrastructure and now CERN's openlab arm is partnering with Rackspace to build out a

hybrid cloud as well. Rackspace announced the collaboration Monday, positioning the project as a way to show that hybrid cloud can suit even the biggest, and most data intensive jobs.

This is a pretty big reference account win for Rackspace, which, along with Hewlett-Packard, Red Hat, IBM, and Microsoft is trying to show that hybrid cloud is the go-to implementation model for many organizations that want to keep some data and applications in-house while tapping public cloud as necessary for some loads. All of these vendors hope to use this hybrid cloud pitch as a counterweight to Amazon web Services huge public cloud push.

Rackspace CTO John Engates

"We're helping them make the vision of hybrid cloud do-able — [CERN is] starting to federate their existing cloud, the cloud we're building with them and the public cloud at Rackspace," said John Engates, Rackspace CTO in an interview. Cern openlab is a mechanism facilitate collaboration between commercial companies and the physics lab. It was unclear if this effort will bring revenue to Rackspace, but Engates said there is big potential upside, although CERN is already a Rackspace public cloud customer.

"Both CERN and Rackspace are putting something in and we get the benefit of doing something at scale with CERN in a context we don't serve very well yet. Research is not something we've targeted as a company yet — we were more focused on pure commercial customers but with CERN doubling down on OpenStack and bringing us in gives us a big test bed and venue. We have aspirations to put our cloud in every context.

As GigaOM's David Meyer reported a month ago, CERN moved away from one open source cloud, OpenNebula, to another in OpenStack. The latter was born out of NASA and Rackspace, but is now governed by the OpenStack Foundation. CERN infrastructure manager Tim Bell was an early supporter of OpenStack, and now a foundation board member. He will speak about his experience at GigaOM's Structure Europe in London Sept. 18-19.

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According to CERN's Tim Bell, in a previous interview at http://gigaom.com/2013/05/31/heres-why-cern-ditched-opennebula-for-openstack/, CERN stopped OpenNebula trial because

"…we wanted an environment where we wouldn't be the largest. We didn't want to be pushing the limits of scalability ourselves; we wanted to be building on the works of others…"

and now Rackspace's John Engate says

"…Both CERN and Rackspace are putting something in and we get the benefit of doing something at scale with CERN in a context we don't serve very well yet…with CERN doubling down on OpenStack and bringing us in gives us a big test bed and venue…"

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Cern, Openstack, Rackspace… together and all good.

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