

Webinar follow up



VIRTUALISATION: REACHING TIPPING POINT

Webinar session Q&A

Presenters

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Attendees' questions from the session

Here are the questions you submitted during the session and answers from our presenters.

Can you elaborate on what cloud native really means? Cloud native applications? In what sense are they cloud native (how they are built, how they run, how portable they are?)

Matt Pooley	<p>Good question without a simple answer. We'll be working more on this over next few weeks and would welcome your views.</p> <p>Current summary: cloud native has many different connotations.</p> <p>To a software dev, it might mean conforming to the 12 factor app design methodology (https://12factor.net/). Most operators we speak to haven't yet figured out what they want from cloud-native, but in essence they are asking for VNFs to be written "software-first" to extract as much performance benefit as possible - not just a PNF thrown in a VM.</p> <p>Much of the current push for "cloud native" is really the CSPs saying "vendors need to do better than what they have managed so far", rather than adherence to a particular design methodology.</p>
David Martin	<p>Agree with Matt's answer. It's essentially about a software-first approach, including the freedom to design, engineer and recombine new functionality rather than being tied to the function sets associated with ASIC-based networking appliances and their VM equivalents.</p>

Why don't you separate VNFs and NFVi in the Tracker?

David Martin	<p>We do. We presented only the aggregate data in the webinar. But in the Tracker spreadsheet itself, we break the public-domain deployments down by all the components that are known, including VNFs and NFVi.</p>
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Comment: We are I think at the tipping point, but having a good NFVI and decent operations in place is currently still an issue.

David Martin	<p>Absolutely. But as Matt says below, these are challenges that telcos and their software and hardware suppliers need to resolve increasingly urgently to take advantage of the broader opportunities from 5G.</p>
Matt Pooley	<p>Agreed. Our argument, however, is that we are now at a point where the wider industry has no option but to get the NFVi in place and sort out their ops.</p>

Although the VNF's may already being OK, the way telcos deploy them is still not clear. Still many telcos deploy them as vertical stacks which is not the right way forward. Do you agree?

David Martin	Completely, but as Matt suggests, it's a trade-off (i.e. between reliable performance now vs ability to evolve the solutions more flexibly later). That's why it's critical for telcos to ensure that the vendor solutions they adopt now <i>are</i> genuinely open and present a clear evolution path towards true cloud-native operations in the 5G future.
Matt Pooley	Completely agreed. There is a toss-up between a vertical stack that is guaranteed to work (and can have a great SLA attached), and what a purist would label the "right way", which is a truly open, flexible approach, that brings new operational headaches. Vendors need to help telcos address these headaches. But also, we need to see more willingness from the telcos themselves to take on some of the risks.

We noticed there aren't any India based telecoms on the list. Why is that?

David Martin	The webinar slides focussed on operators that were leading in terms of NFV/SDN progress. The NFV tracker, which underpins these findings, does include data for Indian based Operators (incl. Bharti Airtel, Reliance Jio, Tata Comms).
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What evidence do you see that virtualized RAN is gaining traction?

David Martin	The Tracker contains information on several recent deployments of virtual / cloud RAN solutions, including as part of the Rakuten and Telenor deployments referred to in the deck. I think vRAN is eventually going to be an integral part of 5G deployments alongside the virtualised 5G core, and for the same reasons: operational and spectrum efficiency, facilitation of network slicing, scalability / flexibility, etc. A lot of work is also being done by a number of vRAN industry groups to define standards and test solutions.
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Next steps

More questions?

To talk about any of these points in more depth, please contact your account director or your usual contact in the consulting team.

Want to read the research?

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