

Host: Jim Larkin, IBM

Speaker: Cindy Clepitch, Networking Services Group, IBM

Jim:

Hi this Jim Larkin of IBM and welcome to an IBM podcast series focused on how to optimize your technology infrastructure. In this series we will cover topics such as how to virtualize the infrastructure, how to increase infrastructure resilience and security, and the proper deployment of service management; along with tips and advice on using technology and services to help you and your organization succeed. One area that many companies may overlook in their optimization plans is the critical area of the network. Recently an industry analyst reported that over \$100 billion will be wasted by 2011 simply by company is buying the wrong networking technology. To help us sort through the right approach we are joined today by Cindy Clepitch, who works in our networking services group here at IBM.

Cindy, we recently heard a lot about IBM's new vision for the data center called the new enterprise data center, which focuses on helping clients use virtualization, energy efficiency, business resilience in service management solutions to reduce costs, drive greater efficiencies, and derive business value from the data center. In thinking about these technologies and solutions especially virtualization and business resilience. Their impact on the network looms large, how do you see the role the network plays in helping clients capitalize on the benefits of solutions like these. And how can companies make the right networking decisions?

Cindy:

Well thanks a lot Jim, I think you're in-sighting questions are spot on. When data centers are consolidators were servers are virtualized the networking that supports these environments really needs to be considered in order to contain and manage network complexity and a very important and – maintain responsiveness and users. We know that end-users, and those can be end-users that work within a company or the customers of the company, interact with the IT environment, they expect to land like, response time, regardless of where the IT resources come from.

Another way to look at this might be considering consolidation and virtualization as a way to simplify the accessibility and management of servers and storage and application resources and that change, creating additional demand and new requirements on the network due to new and unpredictable (if you don't do it right) traffic patterns.

Another way to look at this might be the impact of consolidation and virtualization on something like a maintenance window, and having enough bandwidth to perform system updates. Or system backups which can present challenge in a consolidated environment in terms of completing the backups on time. The bottom line is the new environment will really require a highly resilient, low latency fabric to support the servers, storage and networking needs of an enterprise. So I think you can see that the network has an obvious, pivotal, critical role. Clients can't realize the benefits of the new enterprise data center without a holistic view of and consideration off server, storage, and networks and

the manageability of them. It is critical for our clients to assess and planned for the network as an integral part of these new solutions in order to ensure optimal performance and that's so important, optimal performance and response from these new environments.

Jim:

What are some of the key area or is that you are saying to clients effectively deploying these types of solutions when it comes to the network?

Cindy:

Well, we know as clients evolve their data centers and their data center strategy is they are going to be faced with many additional challenges and let me offer a few. They may lack data on today's application behavior across the network. Or our clients may be experiencing uncertainty over technology choices and we own know there are new alternatives available in the area of networking every single day. Another challenge, maybe having a staff that is skill to handle new technologies. This can present a real challenge and we know that many IT departments are already over stretched. Now let's add onto that, but fact that clients are going to need staff members that have experience, you needed in specific areas to deal with these new complex configurations to ensure that objectives like were silly and see that you mentioned earlier can be achieved. And then another thing that comes to mind is the staff needing to have the experience dealing with these complex migration scenarios so that the transition to the new environment can be implemented without disruption to the end users.

Jim:

How is IBM helping clients overcome these inhibitors?

Cindy:

That's a really great question. IBM has a very robust portfolio of networking professionals services that we use to assist clients in each set step of the process that will help speed the time to value and reduce the overall risk. We can help clients assess the performance of their applications across the network or within the network infrastructure. We can evaluate the client's current environment or predict the performance and availability and the cost of the new environment, and these are really critical. We can also evaluate and recommend options to meet the client's business requirements, because at the end of the day, we know, this is all about meeting the business requirements. Based on the selected solution, we can also architect and design the network of within the data center or between data centers for our client, or (inaudible) at remote locations.

And finally we can pray integration, which means really testing out in a very in a very se-synced incomplete way and complete way, the key components of the new solution to ensure that there's a smooth implementation, and then we can actually deploy the new solution for a client. Our services really include all facets of the network, and how the network supports storage and servers in the overall new enterprise data centers. With our services, we look at the environmentalists to click and this is critical without that holistic view, solution components to address many of the challenges that I described a few moments ago would be overlooked or would not be addressed properly.

Jim:

Great, can you provide a sense on how IBM is delivering solutions today, networking can of course be complex is IBM going it alone or working with partners in this area?

Cindy:

That's another great question. I think we are all aware that no single vendor builds all the networking components needed in the new enterprise data center environment. Our point of view is set and optimize network must be able to take advantage of all technology advances, especially supported by open standards; and in that way the clients can take advantage of a multi-vendor strategy to reduce the risk of being locked in to vendor proprietary strategies. If you think about it, this approach allows an evaluation to be performed on vendor products based on the best fit for the networking requirements for this client's business problem, not based on past history. But also as data center applications gained the ability to become loosely coupled and more flexible to the introduction of SOA and open standards for applications, networks have to evolve, I repeat, they have to evolve to become open environments like to meet these new levels of flexibility.

With the vision announcement IBM has clearly named an ecosystem of approximately 20 partner companies that are involved with open standards for management, information, network, and service oriented architectures. The networking ecosystem of partners such as Juniper networks, Cisco, Avaya, Nortel, (inaudible) and Siemens, will play a key role in delivering optimized solutions for the network that are critical part of the new enterprise data centers.

Now, what distinguishes IBM from the competition is that by employing our network consulting and or solution integration expertise coupled with their effectiveness in working with a complex partner ecosystem. Our services, our IBM's services can help clients select and implement the right technologies with lower risks to meet business requirements. IBM is also distinguished in the marketplace, because we build our networking services as global standardized service products. As we develop these products. We work closely with our partners and ensure we have the right skills and intellectual capital around the world to provide our clients with optimized solutions to achieve business requirements and ensure their success in meeting their business requirements.

Jim:

Cindy, where can I listeners go for more information?

Cindy:

A client can reach out to their IBM client rep or can go to IBM.com and on IBM.com you would go to IBM.com/services/networking to find more information.

Jim:

Cindy Clepitch of IBM, thank you very much.