Micro Focus Extends the Power of Its IT Operations Management Platform With Critical New Services

Introduction

The need for a more cohesive and flexible approach to integrated operations management could never be greater. And yet the industry as a whole has generally drifted toward a more fractured, more best-of-class, and ultimately more siloed, approach. This is due in part to the shifting demands of cloud, agile, and mobile, as well as the failure of past suites and platforms to address a unified view of IT effectively.

This impact brief introduces a significant step forward for what is perhaps the industry's single most telling exception: the Micro Focus IT Operations Management (ITOM) platform. Rather than being simply a suite of options, the ITOM platform is a true architecture with unique advantages in deployment, scalability, and flexibility as well as in function. This brief will discuss the current ITOM advantages of the Micro Focus ITOM platform, with a focus on its recent introduction of critical new microservices.

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Event

On February 5, 2018, Micro Focus announced the introduction of significant new microservices as an evolution of the ITOM platform's containerized deployment foundation, as well as a more versatile approach to leveraging microservices across the various ITOM suites and suite extensions. The new enhancements will help to accelerate value for IT customers while enabling a "clean development ecosystem' for Micro Focus partners. These advances also serve to highlight expanding industry enthusiasm for the ITOM platform's move to support container-driven deployment, updates, and administration. As such, the announcement represents one of the most critical milestones since HPE Software first introduced containerized versions of its ITOM suites on April 12, 2017.

Context

In order to better appreciate the many advantages implicit in this announcement, it's important to first review the suites included in the ITOM platform. Currently available both as containerized offerings and as more traditional on-premises software deployments, these suites include the following:

- **Hybrid Cloud Management** – This suite supports a wide-ranging set of hybrid and multicloud environments for automation and orchestration, cloud brokering and governance, and application delivery as well as DevOps cloud-enablement for both development and testing. The suite includes support for the design and deployment of container-based applications.
- **Data Center Automation** – This suite is designed to promote task automation and orchestrate processes for provisioning, patching, and compliance. The new version supports container, hardware, and host operating system provisioning and compliance capabilities.
- **Operations Bridge** – This suite integrates easily with the Hybrid Cloud Management and Data Center Automation suites to support a broad range of capabilities, including cross-domain event consolidation and reduction and advanced business dashboard capabilities. Support for IT analytics is among the industry's most advanced and includes log analytics and predictive insights into application/service transactional interdependencies.
- **Service Management Automation (SMA)** – This suite is what EMA calls a "next-generation ITSM solution," with fully integrated support for automation and analytics so the ITSM team can serve as a hub for integrated operations, bringing process and governance to support cross-domain efficiencies. It includes support for change and release management, request fulfillment, and asset management, as well as a service portal, big data analytics, and ChatOps social IT and social media support.

- **Network Operations Management (NOM)** – This suite joined the ITOM platform in July 2017. It provides key functions such as topology, health, and configuration of the networked infrastructure, as well as support for performance, capacity optimization, and compliance. NOM also enables automation and active configuration for more complete lifecycle management of virtualized and non-virtualized network environments.
- **Other integrations** – The ITOM platform currently supports integrations from other critical suites such as Micro Focus Application Performance Monitoring and security with ArcSight.

Core Values of Containerization

All five ITOM suites can be deployed with Container Deployment Foundation (CDF), which uses open source container technology from Docker and Kubernetes along with built-in authentication, flexible licensing, and CICD components, with transparent quarterly enhancements for new features and functions. Thanks to containerization, initial ITOM deployments can be measured in minutes, with full integration across suites achieved in just a few hours. And scale-out capabilities are also transparent, as IT organizations seek to improve outreach, coverage, and functional depth. The ITOM container platform is designed for easy deployment of the same product code base either on premises, or in a private cloud, or in public cloud environments (with AWS and Azure currently supported).

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Expanding Microservices

CDF is designed to support a standard set of services to enable ease of deployment, operational performance, and shared functionality across suites. To better understand the impact and value of the Micro Focus' February 5 announcement, it's useful to contrast examples of microservices from 2017 and 2018.

CDF Services in 2017

These include foundational enablement capabilities, such as for *deployments, upgrades, scale-out capabilities, licensing,* and *authentication (identity management)*. Other deployment enablers include *operations* (for optimizing suite performance) and *provisioning lifecycle*, for support across the lifecycle of the deployment.

New Cross-Domain Services in 2018

These new microservices to support cross-domain needs include *operations orchestration, discovery, universal configuration management database (UCMDB), big data analytics, business value dashboard, COSO* (for data collection, storage and analysis*), ChatOps,* an *API gateway* for internal and third-party integrations*, user management,* and *Your Service* to support container-as-a-service options, as well as *continuous integration and continuous delivery (CICD)*.

What's important to realize is that these new cross-domain microservices can support any of the ITOM suites. Moreover, individual deployments can be selective and incremental in how these microservices are being used. For instance, the business value dashboard was a first step toward containerization in one customer deployment. Conversely, in more progressed environments, microservices can be mixed and matched based on individual suite needs and priorities so administrators for each suite can create their own composable use cases. And, in fact, the container foundation with all its services can be used to support customer extensions to ITOM or even customer-developed applications.

Extending Platform Power Through SDKs and Integrations

Not only has Micro Focus significantly enhanced its core ITOM engine, the company is making outreach for broader partner, customer, and industry support more attractive through APIs, SDKs, and microservice libraries. Micro Focus currently has more than 10 global partners actively developing for the ITOM platform, not including other design partners informing on platform direction.

EMA Perspective

Appreciating the true potential of what Micro Focus is doing with its drive toward enriched containerization requires consideration from two perspectives. The first important value consideration resides within the ITOM suites themselves, both individually and as an aggregate. Micro Focus has taken major steps to reduce suite complexity while augmenting synergies and functional breadth. As such, the five suites currently supported by the ITOM platform, along with their fully supported integrations, provide a balanced and surprisingly complete set of capabilities for IT operations, ITSM, IT executives, and even potentially DevOps and SecOps teams through ITOM's current integrations. And while this is especially true for the containerized offerings, this consolidation also serves more traditional ITOM deployments and those seeking a more step-by-step migration toward full containerized deployments.

The second area of attention is, of course, the move to containerization and the impressive enrichment of what Micro Focus calls its "ITOM engine." Through a growing span of microservices that provide industry-unique levels of versatility in supporting individualized suite needs, this ITOM engine provides dramatic advantages in deployment, administration, scalability, and time to value. The potential for individualization of the ITOM engine to support unique IT requirements is also impressive. Moreover, the new architecture delivers value to Micro Focus itself, in terms of expedited development cycles, with outreach to industry and community development partners.

In summary, the enhanced container-based Micro Focus ITOM platform is a true architecture designed for compelling levels of integration and customization, with distinctive strengths in deployment, scalability, and versatility. Its breadth is also unique in terms of environments supported across public, private, and hybrid cloud, as well as more traditional data centers, including mainframes. Through this platform Micro Focus is combining breadth of function—which has advantages for virtually all levels of IT—with ease of use and administration, placing it in a unique and compelling industry position, with special appeal to IT organizations seeking a more holistic, more efficient, and more cross-silo way of working.

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