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●ネットワーキングのコンセプト変化にチャンス見出すビッグスイッチ

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　４年前に創設されたビッグスイッチは当初「Open Flow」ベースのコントローラを開発していたが、同社が新たに発表した製品はネットワーキングのコンセプトが変わってきていることを反映したもの。

　Open Flow ではパケットのルーティングとパケットの伝送を分離することに重点が置かれていたが、業界の関心はプログラム可能な汎用機器に向くようになり、ビッグスイッチの新製品「Big Cloud Fabric」も Open Flow から離れ、ソフトウェアを介してネットワーク・リソースを割り当てられるようになっている。

　この製品は最近グーグルやフェイスブックなどが自社開発しているような単純なスイッチ上で OS として動作するもの。この方針転換で同社創設者の１人が退任するなどの影響は出たものの、カイル・フォースター同社副社長によると、「BigCloud Fabric」は現在顧客 10 社がテストしているだけでなく、同社の他の製品の売上も増やしているとのことで、同社製品の今後の売上は新たなネットワーキング・コンセプトが普及するかどうかを測る試金石にもなると見られている。

（参考）本件報道記事
Big Switch wants to capitalize on networking's big switch. Can it?
By Stacey Higginbotham

Summary:
Big Switch, a company that has shifted from building a controller for software defined networks to building an OS to run atop bare metal switches, is trying to make enterprise networks run like webscale networks.

Big Switch, founded four years ago to create Open Flow-based controller software just as the networking world was getting pumped over Open Flow and the concept of software defined networks, has a new product that represents a shift in how thinking about networking has changed. Instead of making a big deal out of separating the act of routing packets from the act of transmitting packets as Open Flow did, the industry has instead focused on cheaper, commodity boxes and networking gear that's programmable in a way that's

more similar to how cloud computing is allocated. The routing and packet pushing may be separated, but it may not.

Thus the new product, Big Cloud Fabric, has nothing to do with Open Flow and everything to do with making networking look more like programming. Big Cloud Fabric lets programmers allocate network resources via software and is designed to run on top of bare metal switches — the dumb boxes that companies like Google and Facebook have built for themselves and that other vendors like Accton and Quanta can build for cheap. A Facebook switch is pictured above.

Inspired by webscale vendors who have taken control of their networking not just by building their own software and overlays, but also by making sure the box is designed to push packets in a form factor that's cheap, enterprises are trying to make their networks look more like Google's.

This isn't just about cost — although these networks are cheaper to buy and operate — it's about agility. Much as the introduction of cloud computing changed the economics of computing, disrupting the server supply chain utterly and introducing the concept of devops, the networking world is readying for a similar shift. So while the first start was a bit false, it has been working hard to adapt in what is a rapidly changing sector.

Of course, with this shift in Big Switch's vision, the company has seen its share of rumors and even the departure of co-founder and OpenFlow expert Guido Appenzeller. However, Kyle Forster, co-founder and VP of marketing, says the company not only has 10 customers testing the Big Cloud Fabric, but it also has seen substantial revenue growth for its other products, including its Big Tap monitoring product that lets a company install monitoring software in one data center and use that one installation to monitor networking conditions in other data centers.

But now that Big Cloud Fabric is out, the hope is that Big Tap is the gateway drug to the fabric for new networking installations. Especially with certain new types of enterprise workloads from private clouds to Hadoop clusters and virtual desktops, having a more flexible and agile physical infrastructure makes deploying these applications much easier and faster.

So while enterprises won't necessarily replace their existing infrastructure to run a network fabric over new bare metal switches, they don't need to. In addition to new applications and a new style of networking, enterprises are adopting a different kind of deployment and data center architecture called core-and-pod design where new applications are supported by a "pod" of new physical hardware hanging off of the "core" of the data center. In practical terms that means a new service might get a rack or an aisle of new gear, which is a perfect proving ground for Big Switch.

So, now the real question is if Big Cloud Fabric can prove itself for paying customers and Big Switch can follow the current trend in the networking world.

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