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●ネットワーク機能仮想化のオープンソース標準策定する新団体発足

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　大手電気通信事業者、ネットワーキング機器メーカーが Linux 財団の後援の下、ネットワーク機能仮想化（NFV）のオープンソース標準枠組みを策定する新団体を発足した。
　この「Open Platform for NFV Project (OPNFV)」は、NFV 技術を利用するための標準的手法の普及。新たなネットワーキング機器の迅速な開発を促進することを目指す。
　OPNFV が目標とするのは、ネットワーク全体を仮想化する手段の標準化であり、OPNFV の理事長に就任したヒューレット・パッカード（HP）のプロディップ・セン CTO は、この点がソフトウェア・コントローラーに焦点を置くソフトウェア定義ネットワーク（SDN）と異なるところだという。
　現在、OPNFV には、チャイナ・モバイル、インテル、ジュニパー・ネットワークス、ノキア・ネットワークス、NEC、IBM、レッドハットなど 38 社が加盟している。

（参考）本件報道資料
Big telecom companies band together to form open-source project for network functions virtualization
By Jonathan Vanian

Big-name telecom providers and networking manufacturers, like Brocade and Cisco, have joined together under the auspices of the Linux Foundation to help develop a standardized open-source framework for network functions virtualization (NFV). The new organization, called the Open Platform for NFV Project (OPNFV), aims to bring a standard way of using NFV technology to the mainstream so that carriers and other companies can build new high-tech networking products faster.

As the OpenDaylight project, which just released the second version of its codebase, aims to bring a uniform standard to software defined networking (SDN) by creating a software controller that everyone can agree upon, OPNFV

wants to take it a step further and try to standardize a way of virtualizing the entire network, not just one piece, explained Jim Zemlin, the executive director of Linux. This idea of virtualizing every part of the network, not just the software controller, is what separates NFV from SDN, said Prodip Sen, the board chair of OPNFV and a Hewlett-Packard CTO.

During Sen's time working at his previous job at Verizon, he said he learned how difficult it was for major operators to adopt SDN because of the legacy equipment telcos use to power their vast and complicated networks.

Given the complexity and scale of these carriers' network infrastructure, it would make more sense to virtualize all of the hardware gear in their networks — including load balancers, firewalls and even the gear designed to facilitate networking communication activity like the IP Multimedia Subsystem, which enables voice over IP.

"Each [networking capability] represents an expensive hardware component that is difficult to replace and manage," Zemlin said. "That represents billions of dollars of stuff replaced by software that's easier to maintain and is far-less costly."

While the idea for NFV was to help carriers create a more well-managed network through software virtualization, the same idea could be used by enterprises with complex infrastructure as well, said Sen.

The first task of OPNFV will be to take the many proof-of-concept NFV technology proposals submitted by the participating companies and consolidate them so as to lay the groundwork for a standard NFV platform that can be built upon, said Sen. The organization is hoping that the participating companies' enthusiasm bleeds over to the development community as a whole, which could then potentially lead to an active open-source community that could also contribute, Zemlin added.

The OPNFV will also incorporate the different open-source technology out there that pertains to networking, like the OpenDaylight's codebase and OpenStack software, said Sen; however, it will be up to the OPNFV community, once it gets going, to determine which pieces of technology fits into the OPNFV framework.

OPNFV is gearing for a potential release of its platform by next year, Zemlin said.

It's worth pointing out that while the OPNFV is working on standardizing a networking concept that views software as the answer for streamlining the complexity of networks, software in itself can be difficult to manage and is notoriously error prone; there's a reason why configuration management vendors like Ansible and Chef as well as upstarts like Docker are important nowadays and that's because people want to make working with software and IT a less-burdensome task.

Currently, China Mobile, Intel, Juniper Networks, Nokia Networks, NEC, IBM and Red Hat are among the 38 members of OPNFV. Given the amount of companies involved, Zemlin is hoping that the greater good of developing a standard will overshadow the vendor interests that could end up dominating the platform.

"All of us are smarter than any one of us," said Zemlin. "Once the snow ball starts rolling, it is unstoppable."

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