

EVENT FLASH

Infoblox Acquires Netcordia

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IN THIS EVENT FLASH

This IDC Flash analyzes Infoblox's acquisition of Netcordia.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

On May 4, 2010, Infoblox, a provider of DNS, DHCP, and IPAM (DDI) network infrastructure solutions, announced it has acquired Netcordia, a provider of network change and configuration management (NCCM) solutions. Financial terms were not disclosed. Infoblox is headquartered in Santa Clara, California. The acquisition includes Netcordia's employees, assets, and products. Netcordia is a participant in the \$2 billion network performance and operations market.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

IDC believes that this announcement is a proof point of the growing need to increase efficiency of network operations. The acquisition of Netcordia by Infoblox is not one that would be immediately top of mind. Infoblox is involved in DNS, DHCP, and IPAM automation, and Netcordia is focused on network change and configuration management. What they have in common is the automation of labor-intensive network operation tasks. Automation is going to be a key component to achieving higher levels of IT efficiency. When one considers that at this time IT departments are looking to consolidate infrastructure and streamline operations, this announcement begins to make more sense. IT departments are in a difficult position. On the one hand, they are under pressure to reduce infrastructure costs and keep down head count while at the same time dealing with complex, constantly changing IT infrastructures. The only way to do more with less is to automate labor-intensive IT practices such as DNS/DHCP/IPAM tasks and network configuration management. Historically, this has been done manually, with the information stored in flat spreadsheets files that are often out of date.

The goal with the acquisition is to aid IT operations in the management of change. Changes to the network require configuration updates, and every change introduces the chance for errors. Manually performed tasks lack consistency and increase the chance for the introduction of errors. Manual configuration practices provide no audit trail to ensure policy compliance. Manual practices do not scale, are not current, and are very time consuming. As networks grow, they become more complex and difficult to manage and troubleshoot. Ultimately, errors in DNS/DHCP/IPAM or network configuration put network stability at risk. Moving from manual to automated processes can streamline IT operations and make them more efficient and more effective. The combination of these solutions from both vendors can lead to greater network infrastructure automation. This translates into more stable network environments that are easier to troubleshoot since there is an audit trail for all changes made. It also ensures that information is up to date. Both solutions have their own discovery engines, which will eventually be combined. The plan is to have network discovery, topology, port management, policy, and change management available from a single management console.

A flurry of recent acquisition activity on the part of large system management vendors is being driven by a need for consolidation of management functions but also the recognition that this is must-have functionality to ensure that complex IT infrastructures remain up and running. When HP and EMC purchased the two leading NCCM vendors back in 2007, that left the smaller vendors to fend for themselves. Rather than go it alone, the combination of Infoblox and Netcordia can provide a more comprehensive solution to network automation and go a long way to remove the introduction of potentially problematic errors that will eventually result in network downtime. Automation is important if companies hope to keep pace with the rapid changes coming in network infrastructure. Hopefully, this announcement will peak the curiosity of the uninitiated and help spread the word.

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