

The Trickle-Down Effect of Open Compute

Written by Marco Attard
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The rack power distribution unit (PDU) market will not shift towards Open Compute Project product specifications IHS reports, but customisable data centre infrastructure might grow in popularity, even in the mainstream market.



IHS attributes 15% of 2012 rack PDU revenues to customised product sales, and expects the number to grow during 2013.

The Open Compute Project suggests "open source" is the most efficient and economical way of building data centre infrastructure-- meaning all hardware designs should be publically available in the hopes of creating a platform for open dialogue and innovation.

First results for the project can be seen in the custom-designed servers, racks, power supplies and battery systems found in Facebook's Prineville, Oregon data centre.

IHS describes the Open compute project as "peripheral to the rack PDU industry," but it may "prompt more customers to request some level of customisation in PDU products which will in turn motivate suppliers to offer more customisation." Open Compute designs (such as Facebook-designed PDUs able to handle 480V 3-phase power fed directly into the rack) might also trickle down into the mainstream market, as per customer demand.

According to the analyst customised product sales already account for over 50% of PDU revenues for at least "some" PDU vendors. Such vendors tend to adopt a build-to-order (as opposed to ship-to-order) business, pairing quick response to customisation requests with

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competitive pricing.

“There are a number of factors that have led to the increase in customization in the rack PDU market, and it seems that models like the Open Compute Project will contribute to this trend going forward.” IHS concludes.

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