Dell Opens Networking With OS10
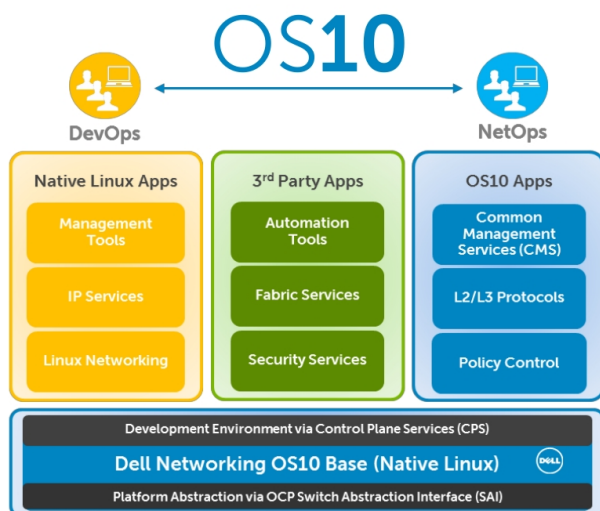
Written by Marco Attard
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Dell takes the Open Networking Initiative a step further with Operating System 10 (OS10)-- a means to disaggregate network software from the underlying hardware, thus providing customers with more flexibility and programmability.

The Open Networking Initiative allows customers to buy Dell-branded switches before choosing from Dell or 3rd party operating systems and applications to create the ideal datacentre environment. OS10 represents a software-based evolution of the concept through a modular networking operating system. It features a free unmodified Linux-based base module running on top of the Open Compute Project Switch Abstraction Interface (SAI), providing a common language between vendor networking operating systems and the silicon making the physical switch.

OS10 supports traditional networking functions (L2/L3 protocols) from Dell, as well as 3rd party, native Linux and open source applications such as IP, fabric, securitiy services and management/automation tools-- essentially allowing customers to tailor IT operations according to use case and operational processes.

The operating system runs on networking hardware, but the long-term Dell plan for OS10 is nothing less than a datacentre operating system converging networking, storage and server resources into a common platform. It will also make the software base for Dell mid-market datacentre, campus and branch devices.

"Modern, software-defined, data centers require a fresh approach to operations-- not just for the

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network, but across compute and storage elements as well," the company says. "OS10 gives customers a future-ready springboard to innovate their networks and data center infrastructure more quickly and consistently, affording customers greater efficiency and capability at scale."

The base OS is currently in beta for Dell S-Series top-of-rack switches before eventual availability sometime during Q1 2016. A beta for the premium version should start in Q2 2016 (before Q3 2016 launch) for S-Series switches, and a version of the OS for Z-series fabric switches will launch later in 2016.

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