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27 October 2017

Microsoft a rebranding of the Azure Container Service (ACS)-- the acronym behind the service is now "AKS," with the K standing for Kubernetes, the Google open-source container orchestration service.



Technically AKS still stands for Azure Container Service, mind, but Microsoft is now putting its weight behind what is becoming the container standard. It offers an Azure-hosted control plane and is free to use on, even if customers have to pay for the VM running the container (alternatives, such as Google Container Engine, demand a flat fee per hour and cluster).

According to Microsoft, Kubernetes has the advantage of "unique" community involvement and portability, leading it to hire Kubernetes co-creator Brendan Burns as leader of Azure container efforts, as well as the acquisition of Deis, developer of the Helm package manager and Steward Kubernetes-native service broker.

That said, the Azure Container Service will continue supporting other orchestration services, namely DC/OS and Docker Swarm, and Microsoft insists it will continue working with Docker and Mesosphere to further improve Azure compatibility.

AKS is currently available for beta testing on the Microsoft cloud.

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