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Industry Insight

Building the OSS bridge as SDN & NFV steam ahead

As the SDN and NFV train steams further on its journey towards network revolution, has the industry stopped to consider the wider impact? Is the infrastructure in place to serve the demands of the new system?

Trials continue with a bout of enthusiasm for the potential of SDN and NFV, which promises to simplify processes, lower costs, rapidly monetize services, and offer a dynamic and agile approach to networking. Heavy Reading's senior analyst **Caroline Chappell** states that although there is dedication to achieving network virtualization, in reality the journey will take a decade. Despite the different views on timescales, the advantages are widely agreed. The under-analyzed element is the huge knock-on effect to systems that interact with the network.

Interlocking the OSS engine

When it comes to Operations Support Systems (OSS), one of the industry's favorite terms comes in to play – 'transformation'. There will certainly be greater workload on the OSS systems, driven by an increase in real-time and complex variations in services and applications. As such, many believe modernizing the OSS systems is essential to realign it to the new SDN and NFV world.

However, SDN and NFV trials are being run in a silo and the current eco-system has not been incorporated, with OSS tools, processes and data stores being ignored. The essential OSS systems need to be added to trials to eliminate the risk, cost, time and retraining that would be required to overhaul the current systems.

Fitting the train to the old railway tracks

When vendors introduced next generation solutions to CSPs, they were hailed as the 'future-proofed' solution to their many cumbersome and complex legacy issues. Next generation solutions have slowly transformed the benefits of OSS for CSPs. Then along comes SDN and NFV.

It is unrealistic to expect CSPs to rip out the investment made in these relatively new systems and take the risk to reintroduce a whole new OSS environment to support SDN and NFV technology. Especially when there is a solution to utilize the existing highly-able OSS systems.

Adding an umbrella solution, a single centralized user interface that pulls in data from OSS systems and communicates with the SDN/NFV side, provides a bridge between the new and established technology. This allows CSPs to take advantage of SDN and NFV, without losing out on the investment already made in their critical OSS systems.

OSS in the SDN/NFV revolution has been considerably underrepresented in both trials and industry comment. In order for CSP's to agree to such significant changes and justify the expense, a realistic, financially-sound solution must be presented. Minimizing the impact on the existing OSS infrastructure, opens the railways tracks for the SDN and NFV train to go full steam ahead.

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