eNovance Uses OpenStack

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Building a Public Cloud

When eNovance decided to build their own Public Cloud to provide Hybrid solutions to their clients, it turned to OpenStack.

Founded in 2008, the French-based company eNovance describes itself as a "new generation" hosting and managed services provider, a pioneer in open source Cloud Computing and expert in Multi-Cloud Management. eNovance is specialized in improving the end-user experience for web and mobile applications, Big Data solutions, and Open Source/Open Cloud environments.

Whether they are e-commerce businesses, SaaS providers or web marketing agencies, eNovance clients, are always seeking for innovative solutions to improve their end-user experience, critical to their business growth. Recurrent demands from their customers were: “How can I get additional hosting capacity if my business grows, in a seasonal or regular manner? How can I be sure I won't get locked with any provider? How to manage the growing amount of data inherent to my business? Will I lose control of my IT infrastructures, etc...”

In order to meet its clients demands, eNovance quickly started to look for the right technical solution to build a Public Cloud with the primary goal of complementing their private cloud offers. Criteria for the benchmark were the following: utilize a technology that is 100% open source, have full control over infrastructures and hardware, ensure compatibility with other Public Clouds, locate the Public Cloud in France, deliver a high-performance cloud and enable hybrid platforms on the same network.

In early 2010, eNovance began studying the different available projects to select the one they wanted to get involved in. The use of a benchmarking framework to realize the above objectives naturally led them to OpenStack. Addressing scalability was a top priority, and OpenStack has the capacity to run not only a few servers, it can run data centers in a short time. Additionally, the fact that OpenStack was already benefiting from a very dynamic ecosystem in which major companies like Cisco, Dell, Canonical and Rackspace were involved was an excellent sign for eNovance. Finally, eNovance leverages open source at its core and developed a specific expertise in managing multi-clouds; it was therefore essential that the selected project would allow full interoperability with other open source clouds, an easiness to “move from cloud to cloud”, thus ending possible vendor or technology lock-in.

eNovance became involved with OpenStack a few months after the project was launched and even if OpenStack was still immature at the time, it was the best project by far. The number of talented developers involved and the future perspectives drawn by the big players of the industry made it very exciting for eNovance to start working on OpenStack; they were on track to develop the best Open Source platform possible.

Behind the scenes of eNocloud: the 1st OpenStack Public Cloud in Europe

Building an open cloud is not an easy task and for that type of project, working with a community is crucial. In 2011 in

France few people were involved in OpenStack and even if they had heard about the project, they were lacking information about how it would change cloud computing. That is why, apart from contributing to the source code, eNovance decided to help communicate about the project by organizing several OpenStack events.

The first objective was to tell the OpenStack Story, invite the creators of the project and the biggest contributors to explain, with concrete use cases, how they work on OpenStack and to what goals. The first OpenStack in action! event took place in September 2011; 150 people gathered to hear from top speakers at Rackspace, Dell, Canonical and Cisco. During the event, eNovance announced the launch of the first beta version of their OpenStack Public Cloud based on the Diablo release, and 60 companies registered to test it. The types of companies using the beta platform were quite diverse, including insurance, online gaming, e-commerce platforms, universities and SaaS providers.

The next step was for eNovance to gather feedback and involve more people in the beta program in order to quickly treat fixes and improve user experience. The adherence of eNovance to the Free Software dynamic of the OpenStack community helped considerably, because users of other cloud providers also contributed to the feedback loop. It was not rare that eNovance fixed a bug to resolve the problem experienced by the user of another company. Although it may seem counter-productive for a company to help its competitor, it is actually a huge benefit of open source that has allowed eNovance to anticipate the needs of its own customers. The eNovance technical team was also in regular contact with beta testers of the most complex projects, including companies like SOASTA (No. 1 in Cloud Testing) that was using the platform for massive scale tests, and Concours Mania (expert in promotional games for consumer brands) that was testing the rapidity in deployment. Thanks to tremendous level of engagement in the beta program, eNovance was quickly getting closer to its final goal of a production cloud.

eNovance doubled its efforts in the project. The developers were working on Debian packaging for OpenStack and integrating Puppet automation. In parallel, the marketing and sales team were intensifying communication by organizing breakfasts and eNovance's CEO, Raphaël Ferreira, was invited to speak at several IT conferences to tell the OpenStack story. The beta cloud based on the Essex release was announced in April 2012, and 120 companies began testing the platform.

The second OpenStack in action! event took place on on May 31, 2012 and served as a platform for eNovance to officially launch eNocloud: the first OpenStack Public Cloud in Europe. Among the initial 120 beta users who had a free access to the platform, half were willing to pay for it and directly switched to eNocloud. For a company the size of eNovance, it was an amazing success. Moreover, having organizations like Chronopost (part of the La Poste group, the French national mail) and the CNES (government agency responsible for shaping and implementing France’s space policy in Europe) among the users was extremely positive and gave confidence to the security and efficiency of the solution.

Apart from the technical message about the great features of OpenStack, at the end, it's all about how it can improve your business. Many OpenStack testers underlined the consequent time savings they had experienced while deploying new servers. According to Stephane Rios, CEO of Fasterize, developer of a SaaS solution to improve web performance, “reducing this 'time-to-market' is clearly an open door to innovation, and improves competitiveness and agility."

Interest for OpenStack was definitely booming and after one year of intensive investment on the project, eNovance was identified as the OpenStack expert in France. Moreover, for a young and small company like eNovance, figuring in the Top 10 largest contributors in the source code of OpenStack was seen by all as a reward for their investment. For that reason, Canonical and Dell both signed partnerships with eNovance and gave them the responsibility to deploy OpenStack Private Clouds for their clients in France: it was a real reconnaissance for eNovance, they knew they had bet on the right horse.

"We knew we had to reinvent the job of a traditional hosting company and quickly detach ourselves from competition by being innovative and specialized in a specific area of expertise: choosing OpenStack was a way to do so. We provide top notch managed services on open source clouds, we don't want to be the biggest but we want to provide our customers with the best service possible,” said Raphaël Ferreira, CEO, eNovance.

eNovance

http://www.enovance.com
Industry: Information Technology
Headquarters: Paris
Size: 5,001 to 10,000 employees

OpenStack technologies eNovance uses:

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