

Opengear Establishes Australian Office to Develop Open Source Solutions for Global Market

US-based start up, Opengear (<http://www.opengear.com.au>), has established an Australian office to develop and sell a range of Open Source infrastructure management solutions.

The brainchild of Queensland serial entrepreneur, Bob Waldie, Opengear is initially targeting the niche console server management market after identifying enormous potential to drive down prices and make open source products more accessible and affordable in this space.

Open Source Keeps Costs Down

After researching the market, it became clear that vendors in the IT infrastructure management sector have not passed on the savings they have achieved as a result of moving to open source technologies. While our products are comparable to other market offerings in terms of functionality and quality, they cost between 50 to 70 per cent less than the leading brand and our entry level eight port console server product costs under A\$700, Bob Waldie said.

My goal is to create strong downward pressure on prices, because I believe that will not only make these products more accessible so a wider range of organisations can benefit from this technology, but it will also encourage greater creativity around potential new applications and markets.

The market for these products has traditionally been data centres, but we also want to sell them into companies with multiple branch offices or retail outlets that currently see these products as being too expensive but who would be considering purchasing them at a lower price point, he said.

Product Range Development Plans

Opengear has launched with a line of five console server management products and is also developing a range of open source KVM (keyboard, video, mouse) over IP products which will be released in the second half of this year. KVM over IP technology allows companies to use the resources of one or more remote PCs over a broadband Internet connection to access files, operate equipment or update software and utilities.

A third line being developed for subsequent release in the area of IPMI (Intelligent Platform Management Interface) over IP will enable remote maintenance and disaster recovery of servers and PCs. IPMI is a new Intel-led standard that uses a secondary processor to monitor and manage hardware, tracking performance variables such as temperature to proactively identify and resolve potential problems.

Opengear Business Plans

As CEO of Opengear, Waldie is drawing on his extensive technical expertise, management experience and professional contacts gained from his previous entrepreneurial successes with Stallion Technologies, Moreton Bay Ventures, and SnapGear. He has just returned to Australia after spending the past two years living and working in the United States after his two previous ventures were acquired by US companies.

Opengear has a solid business case and is funded by a mix of US venture capital and Australian investment partners, with Waldie teaming up with several colleagues from former ventures to establish the new entity.

The IT infrastructure management market is currently worth around US\$800 million, of which console server management accounts for US\$120 million. We are on target to achieve turnover of US\$2-3 million within the first 12 months and expect to grow that to US\$10-20 million by the second year, he said.

While our major focus is on Australia and the US where we have people on the ground, I'm also talking to contacts with distribution capabilities in Asia and Europe, so the products will be available globally.

Local Operation

Within Australia, Opengear products will be distributed through a network of value added resellers with expertise in general infrastructure management.

All our development work is based in Australia, so it's important to have a local sales operation here to keep the developers talking to customers.

Although Opengear is essentially Australian at its core, it has been established as a US entity so we are prepared down track for a NASDAQ listing or growth by acquisition, he said.

Waldie has 10 years experience in data communications and security in the open source space and believes these technologies still offer huge potential for growth.

Open Source Benefits

Opengear is making a completely open source play because I believe open source has enormous benefits to offer in infrastructure management. We're going to see greatly increasing demand for these kinds of products as the open source community identifies and creates new applications, Mr Waldie said.

The KVM over IP project (<http://okvm.sourceforge.net>) is a case in point, with Opengear enlisting the support of other industry players, including key competitors, to develop an open source industry standard for KVM over IP. Once developed, it will significantly increase the opportunities for

Opengear, particularly with new embedded hardware products based on these standards.

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About Opengear

Opengear is a new player in the secure server management market, providing Console and KVM (keyboard, video, mouse) management solutions for commercial and industrial customers. These products are aggressively priced, and they enable customers to securely monitor and control their distributed networks of servers and devices. All products are built upon open source software and open source hardware standards, and Opengear takes a lead role in the development of open source KVM over IP and Console management technology, and standards.

For further information please contact:

Bob Waldie Opengear07 3846 0987

bob.waldie@opengear.com.au0429 906 740

Shuna BoydBoydPR02 9418 8100