Turning **VISION** into **ACTION**®

PRESIDENT'S NOTE

Dear Friends,

The Fall is upon us and the landscape is changing with the initial release of Windows 10 and the future roadmap of "Windows as a Service". Also, there are many prominent Cloud options on the horizon, but selecting the right service is critical both from a security and portability perspective. Please check these out in this issue of ActioNews. Best wishes for the new season!

Please visit us at www. actionet.com, select Vote ActioNet for the DC's Coolest Companies, click on the URL and then Finish Survey.

Ashley W. Chen
President & CEO

IN THIS ISSUE

Windows 10 and Beyond

By Jeffrey D. Abish, EVP & CTO

We have been accustomed to new Desktop Operating Systems from Microsoft every few years with the promise of improved reliability and security with a more modern interface while still maintaining backward compatibility. It seems like every other version of Windows "gets it right" with broad user adoption and OEM support. While Windows 8 boasted faster booting and the touch-based Metro Interface with rectangular tiles, it also suffered from a split personality including a disjoint Desktop Mode, which looked somewhat like Windows 7 minus the familiar Start Menu, which was partially brought back in Windows 8.1.

On July 29, 2015, Microsoft released the initial version of Windows 10. Here are some initial impressions:

User Interface

Windows 10 has a new Start Menu, which combines a less flexible version of the Windows 7 Start Menu for those more comfortable with using the keyboard and mouse, as well as components of the Windows 8 tile interface (see the picture above). The new Windows 10 tablet mode provides much of the touch capability of Windows 8.1 featuring spread-out tiles with limited groupings and the Start options hidden under the "triple horizontal line" icon in the upper left.

"Microsoft's first modern browser ... looks poised to take on Firefox and Chrome head-to-head."

Compatibility

This is one area where Windows 10 shines. There are no huge application security model or driver architecture changes, as there were when moving from Windows XP to Windows Vista, or Windows XP to Windows 7. In the few cases where a compatibility problem exists, the installer highlights those and tells you what you can do about it (if applicable). Any application running on Windows 7/8/8.1 will run just fine on Windows 10.

ActioNews

ActioNet solutions are built on **People, Innovative Processes, Technology** and **Partnership**. ActioNet has established an outstanding track record of creating continuously forward-looking, cost-effective IT solutions, meeting such Federal mandates as 'cloud-first' initiatives. Our ActioNetCloud® family of service offerings include:

➤ **ActioNetDesk™**
➤ **ActioNetAgile™**
➤ **ActioNetHosting™**
➤ **ActioNetMobility™**
➤ **ActioNetCyber™**
➤ **ActioNet360™**

For a complete list of ActioNet-Cloud™ Solutions, visit www.actionet.com/Solutions/ActioNetCloud.asp

ActioNet's Core Values center on Customer Service, Employee Growth and the Quality of our Work. We continually invest in our people and our capabilities with a continual process improvement focus based on ISO 20000, ISO 27000, ISO 9000, HDI and CMMI® Level 3. We are proud to have many certified staff:

➤ 500 ITIL Certified
➤ 100 PMP Certified
➤ 80 DoD 8570 Compliant
➤ 35 ScrumMasters
➤ 24 AWS Certified Technical

The key to successful transformation into a performance-based, customer-focused organization is clearly defining the current state of the organization and building a detailed roadmap for improving service delivery.

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ActioNet Summer Events 2015
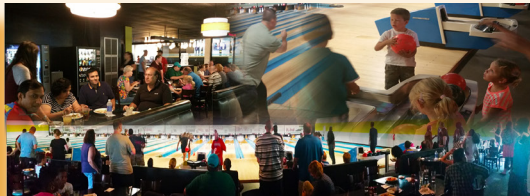

WASHINGTON, DC, 7/18, Nationals Park

NEW JERSEY 7/18, Di Donato's Family Fun Center

NEW YORK, 7/25, Bowlmor Lanes

NEW MEXICO, 7/25, Albuquerque BioPark Zoo

COLORADO, 7/28, Euclid Hall Bar & Kitchen

NEVADA, 7/30, Echo & Rig Steakhouse

OKINAWA, JAPAN, 8/15, Onna Village

HAWAII, 8/15, Dave & Busters

CALIFORNIA, 8/22, San Onofre Beach Club

TEXAS, 8/23, Dave & Busters

More Cow Bell Please - ActioNet HSBU All Hands and Totally COOL Ice Cream Break

Our Health Services Business Unit in Baltimore hosted an All Hands on 8/17/2015. Dave Collignon and his leadership team shared their many HSBU Initiatives, Innovation, Business and Professional Growth with our many ActioNeters in Baltimore right outside of our building. Kudos to all ActioNeters who make our success possible! At the end of the All Hands it was clear that the fever of success had been caught by our Health Services members prompting Ashley to ring a service hand bell to queue an Ice Cream truck. However, she quickly noted that the only prescription to our collective success across ActioNet was to hear some Cow Bell! Low and behold a cow bell materialized and its ringing was immediately followed by an appearance of an ice cream truck playing its theme song, pulling in front of everybody. We all enjoyed an ice cream bar prior to breaking for lunch. Everyone went back to work happy in the afternoon. How COOL is that!

"While Amazon's large suite of cloud products is a good choice for some customers looking to move to the Cloud, we should remember it's not the only choice."

Cloud Means Choices

By Tony Wilburn, Sr. Systems Architect

VMware Differentiation

HYBRIDITY - hy·brid·i·ty [hahy-brid-i-tee]

The extension of on-premises infrastructure to the cloud that enables application and data mobility while retaining control via existing people, processes, tooling, and automation.

When our customers ask questions about Cloud Computing, the first thought for many of us is Amazon Web Services (AWS). While Amazon's large suite of cloud products is a good choice for some customers looking to move to the Cloud, we should remember it's not the only choice.

Customers that use VMware as their virtualization technology in their on-premise Data Centers will find that moving to AWS means a change to both the way systems are managed and to the virtual machines themselves. AWS has made it easy to build virtual machines from a standard set of AWS Machine Images or AMIs and it is relatively easy to convert a VMware VM for use in the Amazon infrastructure – but that's the extent of Amazon's interoperability. Once you join the AWS ecosystem, it is very difficult to move out of the environment.
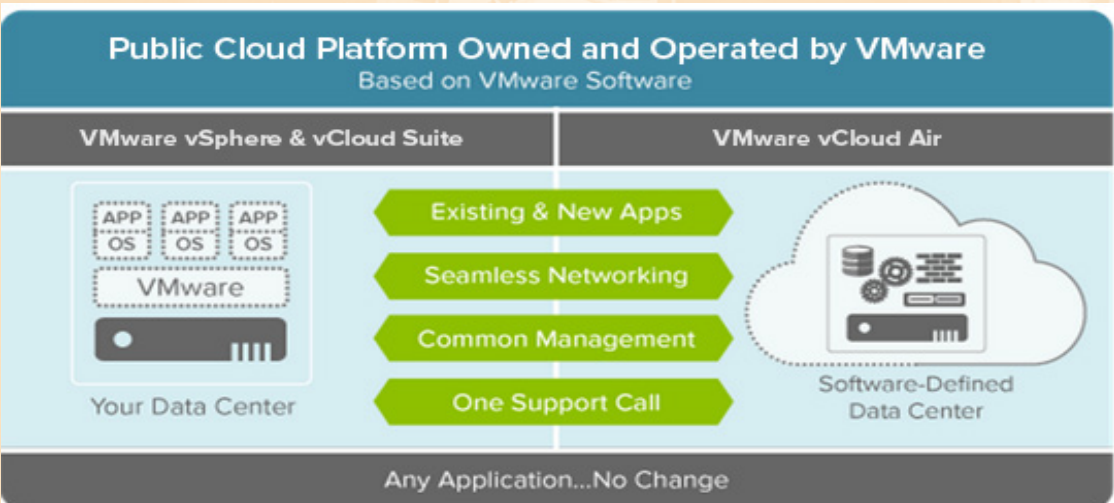
A better choice for VMware centric customers could be the VMware vCloud Government Service (vCGS). VMware has developed a FedRAMP compliant cloud for government agencies through a partnership with multiple Data Center providers. ActioNet is a VMware business partner and we are able to offer this cloud solution to our customers as well as their managed hosting, and colocation services. Colocation is often very important to organizations that want to move away from maintaining a physical data center but have legacy applications that require refactoring before they are cloud ready. The vCloud Government Service offering embraces a "Cloud of Clouds" environment supporting a Direct Connect link to the AWS Cloud as well as a consolidate portal

view to manage distributed resources across multiple Cloud platforms.

There are several use cases that would make vCGS an excellent choice. For customers that are running VMware in their existing data center, vCGS gives them the ability to move workloads into a public cloud, and back. The "and back" is a key differentiator when it comes to cloud providers. This prevents lock-in to any one Cloud Service Provider (CSP). If a customer is unhappy with the performance or availability of their systems with a given CSP, they can easily move it back on premise, or to another provider.

Another key differentiator and advantage to using VMware and the vCGS is the ability to have a private cloud within the Hosted Data Center. This means if a customer has sensitive data that must be physically separated, or meet HIPAA requirements for security and compliance, they can have their own physically separated rack or racks of equipment within the vCGS. This is a feature that is not offered by AWS or many other cloud providers. Using VMware and vCGS gives our customers the ability to have a truly scalable "Cloud of Clouds" – that implements private, community, and hybrid cloud models using the same toolsets and same skillsets across all environments.

It is important for us to know and understand the diverse Cloud Services options that ActioNet can provide customers. This enables us to think differently about potential solutions and ways to manage infrastructure, applications, and services in a manner never envisioned or enabled by a traditional data center environment.

Public Cloud Platform Owned and Operated by VMware
Based on VMware Software

VMware vSphere & vCloud Suite	VMware vCloud Air
APP OS / APP OS / APP OS — VMware — Your Data Center	Existing & New Apps / Seamless Networking / Common Management / One Support Call — Software-Defined Data Center

Any Application...No Change

Windows 10 and Beyond

Universal Windows Apps

Microsoft is pushing hard to join the world of Apps that Apple and Android have made ubiquitous. The Universal Windows app experience has improved significantly for Windows 10 from the Windows 8.1 experience. With the introduction of the single, unified Windows 10 core and the Universal Windows Platform (UWP), one app package can run across all platforms. You now build one Universal Windows app that runs on all Windows 10 devices. Run your app on a Windows 10 phone, a Windows 10 desktop, or Xbox. It's the same app package. You can design your pages so they render properly no matter what device is used to view them.

Browser

Microsoft's first modern browser and arguably its most advanced Universal Windows app program, looks poised to take on Firefox and Chrome head-to-head. It has a streamlined new design, runs fast, and is closing in on its rivals in HTML5 support. Edge is more secure than Internet Explorer because it doesn't support any of the residual add-ins such as ActiveX, Silverlight, Custom Navigation Bars, Browser Helper Objects, VBScript nor attachEvent. For those that rely on these components, Internet Explorer 11 is also included with Windows 10.

The Microsoft Edge browser has basic features, with good annotation options that could come in handy to those who are looking to enhance collaboration on the web, but it still lacks a number of key features such as an option to save annotations as screenshots. One of the major features that Microsoft will be adding soon is extension support, which should further enhance browser functionality in a way that's already seen in other browsers.

Microsoft is working to add Google Chrome extension support, which basically means that you should be able to pick extensions designed to work in Google's browser and then install them to run in Edge. All Edge extensions will be published in the Windows Store after being verified first. This extension support for Edge is projected to arrive sometime in the next few months, most likely in October, as part of a larger Windows 10 update.

Should You Upgrade to Windows 10?

Windows 10 boots faster, works faster, and seems much more robust than either Windows 7 or Windows 8/8.1. Windows 7 upgraders can take advantage of many Windows 8 improvements: a better Task Manager, more functional File Explorer (though it still doesn't support tabs), Storage Spaces to manage all of your drives in a group, File History, built-in antivirus, and the considerable under-the-hood improvements in Windows 8.

Other ease-of-use improvements include smoother in-place upgrades. Cortana is starting to become a viable "assistant," if you are willing to let Microsoft look at your activities. The potential for Cortana help extends into every interaction you have with Windows. On that note, please pay close attention to the default Security and Privacy Settings, especially if you log in with a Microsoft account rather than a local account. Windows 10 default settings maximize the collection of information and can also auto-connect to and share Wi-Fi hotspots, which can expose your computer to malware and other vulnerability exploits. It is recommended that you go through the Settings and turn off these "information collection" features that you don't need or use. If you have already taken the Windows 10 plunge, also keep on top of the Security Patches for both the OS itself and the Edge Browser. Plug-in support, which includes Web Security add-ons, is still not ready and is slated for a future release. There are many good features in Windows 10, but a finished or good baselined product is still a work in progress.

The Future of Windows

The initial release of Windows 10 on July 29 was more of a consumer version with the back-to-school crowd in mind. The next major release of Windows 10 won't appear until October or thereabouts, in the form of Threshold 2. Think of TH2 as an accelerated Service Pack 1, ready for the enterprise.

The new service-based strategy for Windows is another sign that Microsoft is catching up with other modern technology companies. In the years following Satya Nadella's appointment to CEO, the new leader has not only emphasized the importance of cloud and mobile, but the power of being a services company.

Microsoft's decision to deliver Windows as a service, with smaller incremental updates, does not equate to a lack of major feature rollouts on the horizon. The mobile version of Windows 10 will be released after the desktop release, with new interactive technologies on the horizon such as HoloLens.

"The new service-based strategy for Windows is another sign that Microsoft is catching up with other modern technology companies."