The View from the Other Side of Interop

Lori MacVittie, 2009-08-05

Everyone who is involved in networking, application networking, cloud computing, and virtualization knows about and is probably planning some kind of presence at Interop. It is "the" event for a variety of inter-related industries, all revolving around network-*something*.

For six years I attended Interop, but as a member of the press. This time, I'm on the "other side" with a vendor, and the view is very different. At a minimum, there's a lot more planning that goes into exhibiting at such an event. There's booth layouts to review and decisions on what kind of information folks will be wanting to see this year and what kind of swag will be given out (cause it's always about the swag, right?) There are preparations of a logistic nature to more strategic discussions to the mundane scheduling of booth duty. It's a lot of work, and while you *know* that from an attendee/press perspective just walking around the floor it's still surprising to see just how much time is taken up by preparations in the weeks before the show.

But what a show it's going to be…the preparations will certainly be worth the effort.

THE DYNAMIC DATA CENTER

The keynote speakers at Interop this year are heavily focused on virtualization, cloud, and dynamic infrastructure. VMWare and HP figure prominently in the keynotes, and the focus is all about dynamism. In fact the entire show seems geared toward helping attendees figure out how to move their static network and application network infrastructure to a more dynamic, agile, efficient one.

This year is very exciting for F5, as CEO John McAdam will be delivering a Wednesday morning keynote. And really, if you haven't heard John speak before and you'll be at Interop, stop by. You'll enjoy not only hearing what he has to say about agility and reducing costs, but his delivery, too.

Interop has always been about, well, interoperability and networking. Those terms have come to mean more and encompass a broader set of technologies than the ones on which they originally focused. It's no longer enough that your routers and switches seamlessly route and forward packets. Applications, infrastructure, and networks are growing ever more dependent on one another and that interdependence requires awareness and intelligence and collaboration in the network like never before. If infrastructure is "cool again", then Interop this year is its re-emergence into the spotlight. Infrastructure as a focus for architecting efficient, agile data centers is certain to be one of the key takeaways from Interop this year.

Of course we'll be participating in other ways and on more focused topics; on panels and with sessions and games on the show floor. If you haven't filled out your calendar yet, you might find one of our sessions interesting:

- A Comparison of WAN Optimization Controllers
  Kenneth Salchow, Senior Technical Marketing Manager, F5
  Tuesday, May 19 - 11:30 AM-12:30 PM
- The Impact of IT Virtualization on Applications and Networks
  Speaker: Kenneth Salchow, Senior Technical Marketing Manager, F5
  Tuesday, May 19 - 4:00-5:00 PM

THE OTHER KIND OF NETWORKING

No networking-focused event would be complete without the other kind of networking, the *social* networking. Social networking as a concept and term may have been, in recent years, subsumed by the mainstream but it's always been an

active, living thing in technology. We used to use business cards and cell phone numbers and e-mail, and now we're using Twitter (watch for the #interop tag) and Facebook and Flickr and YouTube to keep folks up to date and connected with not only companies but people.

Interop is a time of re-acquaintance and saying hello to folks you may not have seen in years. It's a time to meet with your peers and get the low-down on technology, products, solutions, and vendors. A time to hang-out and hook-up with experts from every corner of the networking industry. It's a time to discover what's new and exciting in technology and how that technology may be able to transform your data center in the coming years or solve a problem you have *right now*.

So if you're at Interop, stop by and say hello, ask some questions, challenge us to solve *your* problems, check out what's new and exciting. We look forward to seeing you there.