Ceph

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New Foundation Is Dedicated to Managing and Promoting Ceph

The Ceph Foundation is intended to support the community that relies on the fast-growing Ceph unified distributed storage system.

Karen D. Schwartz | Dec 04, 2018

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A new group dedicated to supporting the Ceph open source project community is off to a good start. The group--under the auspices of the Linux Foundation--

The foundation is intended to support the community that relies on the open source Ceph and ensure its continued development. The organizational structure also allows for sponsor organizations to provide funding and resources in a way that's almost impossible with a more traditional open source effort, or even one largely controlled by an organization like Red Hat. In addition, it provides a clearinghouse function for the broad community of developers who are working to evolve the technology.

The Ceph Foundation also will provide a formal governance structure for all companies that rely on Ceph as a core component of their own products and services. This type of centralized coordination is particularly useful in situations where different "flavors" of the same basic technology can yield incompatibilities that can cause real frustration for the IT shops that deploy them, said Steve McDowell, senior analyst for storage and converged infrastructure at Moor Insights & Strategy.

Creating a foundation somewhat independent from its parent, the Linux Foundation, is a good move and should be applauded, McDowell said.

"Foundations are increasingly being used to help protect, guide and fund critical open source technologies that have achieved broad adoption," he said. "Beyond the Linux Foundation itself, we've seen the structure used to great effect with the Apache Software Foundation and the OpenStack Foundation."

The formation of the Foundation also attests to the importance of Ceph as a core storage technology in the era of cloud. It's a particularly good technology for object storage, McDowell said, because that type of storage is well-suited to the vast amount of unstructured data being created today.

managed with the more familiar semantics of file and block storage, while also providing a layer of reliability and availability that isn't available by object storage alone," he explained. "It's about ensuring that the intrinsic benefits of object storage are available to applications that benefit from it without significant rework of those applications."

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MANAGEMENT & MOBILITY

Are Ruggedized Laptops More Rugged Than Your Business Needs?

Systems that can withstand blowing sand and solar radiation can surely handle spilled coffee, but ruggedized laptops come at a premium.

Paul Heltzel | Jan 03, 2019

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Each year, along with regular laptop refreshes, a handful of manufacturers releases new ruggedized laptops that can handle extreme conditions. They feature bright displays that can be used in direct sunlight, industrial-grade cooling systems, built-in LTE, long battery life, and the ability to work in a range of temperatures. Military-grade ruggedized laptops from vendors like Panasonic and Dell can accommodate conditions such as blowing sand, explosive atmosphere, solar radiation and thermal shock. In other words, they can definitely handle a coffee spill and a fall from a desk. But does that make them worth the enterprise's while?

"More and more, we're seeing enterprise users turn to rugged laptops to minimize downtimes and improve the ROI on their devices," says Dan Diliberti, head of

and health care spaces, and for anyone who travels frequently and needs a fail-safe solution.

"The terms 'rugged' and 'durable' refer to mobile computing devices that have achieved a specific ingress protection [IP] rating for guarding from dust and liquids," says Robert Gronenthal, CEO of Island Tech Services, which sells rugged devices that can be used in the rain or by users wearing gloves. "Ratings vary, but typically rugged and durable computing equipment must have a rating of IP65-IP67, where the first digit means the device is protected from dust intrusion that may harm the equipment, while the second digit refers to the amount of water or liquid protection offered, from water spray from all directions to strong water jets and waves."

Gronenthal identifies three types of rugged notebooks--fully-rugged, semi-rugged and consumer-grade/professional-rugged--which line up with the offerings from companies like Panasonic and Dell. Prices increase with each tier of performance:

- **Fully rugged devices** are the toughest models, meant for the most demanding users, like first responders and workers in disaster zones. "For users of these devices, the field is their office, and the situation is critical," Gronenthal says. "Extra-long battery life, multiple wireless communications options, and extremely rugged and durable design are hallmarks of fully-rugged mobile computers."

- **Mid-range semi-rugged models** are built to handle spills and exposure to multiple environments. "For users of these devices, the computer is their mobile office, so the protection of the computer and the data it collects is important," he says. Most rugged laptops feature removable storage so data can be protected--and secured--when they're serviced.

- The entry tier, **consumer grade or professional-rugged**, is typically used

In addition to reliability in the field, rugged notebooks should fail less frequently than regular laptops. Panasonic says its rugged notebooks see a failure rate of about 3 percent, and while we can't verify that, it is likely the industrial-grade requirements of emergency workers and field workers would demand more reliable performance. Consumer Reports found that the average laptop failure rate after three years of use is 18 percent.

"Device deployment in a large enterprise can take anywhere from three to five years," says Panasonic's Diliberti. "If you purchase a prosumer device-- a consumer device positioned for the enterprise--you're lucky if it lasts 12 months, meaning your employees will only use the device for one-third of the time it took to deploy it."

Increased reliability, however, comes at a cost. Ruggedized laptops are typically three to four times as expensive as a typical business notebook with similar specs for processor, storage and RAM.

"Truthfully, not everyone needs a rugged device," says Umang Patel, director of product marketing for Dell's ruggedized notebook business. "Our business/commercial devices are tested to a host of [military standards]. These tests are designed to ensure even our commercial and education offerings can withstand the daily rigors of the office or, as we know, an even harsher elementary school classroom."

Patel does think rugged notebooks have a place in the enterprise, especially for mobile users who are willing to pay a premium for a reliable machine for use in the field.

"If your users are highly mobile and spend most of their time on concrete floors

Enterprise users who are more concerned about their ability to deliver uninterrupted service over the upfront cost of the device are more likely to give rugged notebooks a look, Patel says.

"Often the role of the user, rather than the type the device, is what dictates the level of durability required," says Gronenthal. A candidate for a full-rugged laptop may be someone who shares the laptop with other users in an extreme environment but has little personal attachment to the device, while a professional-rugged user might guard the laptop like it's his or her personal property."

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