

Racemi's portable image-based provisioning goes modular in search for OEMs

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Sector: Enterprise Software

Event summary

- Racemi, the image-based provisioning company that can move workloads between dissimilar hardware, is betting on its growing relationship with BMC to boost market traction. The relationship grew out of a deal with BladeLogic, now part of BMC.
- In order to be more flexible with BMC and with other potential OEMs and resellers, Racemi has been repackaging DynaCenter, originally a monolithic datacenter automation platform, into server recovery, disaster recovery and consolidation modules.
- Racemi's primary differentiator is that it captures portable 'server images,' including OS, application, data and configuration settings, that are stored centrally and can be deployed on any server for workload moves, restores or mass deployment.

The 451 take

Racemi is eight years old, and its core technical team has worked together for 18 years (see our previous report for history). Its portable image technology recognized early the importance of moving the full context of a workload around a dynamic datacenter, an idea that's now catching on elsewhere. But Racemi has found customers unwilling to chance a startup for this sort of critical infrastructure. Its projections for growth from when we last caught up with them (in March 2007), have not materialized. Now it's hoping that OEMs and partners – such as BMC – will lend it the credibility with users it's struggled to gain. BMC hasn't always come up with the goods for previous partners, but this deal stems from the BladeLogic side of the house.

Details

Automated provisioning and dynamic datacenter management is still important for **Racemi**, but the company has found its broad DynaCenter platform easier to digest when packaged to fit the three most common customer use cases: server recovery, disaster recovery and datacenter consolidation. That's how DynaCenter is being sold. DynaCenter RSR (rapid server recovery) enables rapid and verifiable server recovery within a single datacenter. DynaCenter DR can restore critical operations quickly across multiple sites, at levels of price-performance not typically found in disaster recovery products, Racemi claims. The third module, DynaCenter DCC (datacenter consolidation), can capture and deploy system images to new hardware as a means of consolidating server resources or migration.

Racemi's preferred route to market is now through OEMs and partnerships. **BMC** is the most prominent deal to be signed so far – a contract that was under negotiation with **BladeLogic** before BMC acquired it. OEMs are apparently receptive to Racemi's image-based provisioning, where images can be booted up from direct-attached storage, NAS or SAN storage. When compared to the script-based products they're currently using it like going up from provisioning 1.0 to 3.0, Racemi claims. The image portability – supporting **HP-UX**, AIX, Solaris (Sparc and x86), Windows, Linux and **VMware** platforms, is a clear differentiator.

Competitive landscape

PlateSpin also encapsulates server workloads that are portable between physical and virtual hosts. PlateSpin, however, has gained considerably more market traction than Racemi – and is now owned by **Novell**, which acquired the company last February for \$205m. Scalent is a more recent competitor, but it's chosen to focus on booting images from a storage area network, which Racemi believes could limit its market reach. Hewlett-Packard's **Opware** is script-based provisioning and is a potential partner along similar lines to Racemi's BladeLogic deal. Racemi also regards VMware's Site Recovery Manager as complementary to its own technology.

The little-known San Diego-based company **Storix** positions its SBAdmin backup and system recovery product (now on version 6.3) as a means of bare-metal restore and migration onto dissimilar hardware – it supports AIX, Linux and Solaris. Storix has been gradually expanding its reach from its original focus on backup to cover disaster recovery, provisioning, migration and change management. It's a halfway house between Racemi and lower-end image management companies such as **Acronis** and **Symantec**, which have largely focused on straight provisioning for the Windows PC and low-end server market. Racemi says it doesn't regard these companies as competition, but acknowledges that there can be customer confusion over the differentiation.

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