

Platform9 Announces General Availability of Managed Kubernetes and Fission Project!

Since the launch of the company, which I was pleased to be able to cover a lot of exciting changes and growth with Platform9 over the last couple of years. What began as the OpenStack-as-a-Service focus has expanded to embrace both feature additions within the OpenStack offering as well as the addition of Docker and Kubernetes management.

Platform9 Announces General Availability of Managed Kubernetes

Kubernetes is gaining momentum in a way that has been unseen since Docker stormed onto the containerization scene in recent years. From much of what I've seen in the market and among customers and community members investigating container orchestration, Kubernetes has emerged as the de facto standard from what it seems at this point.

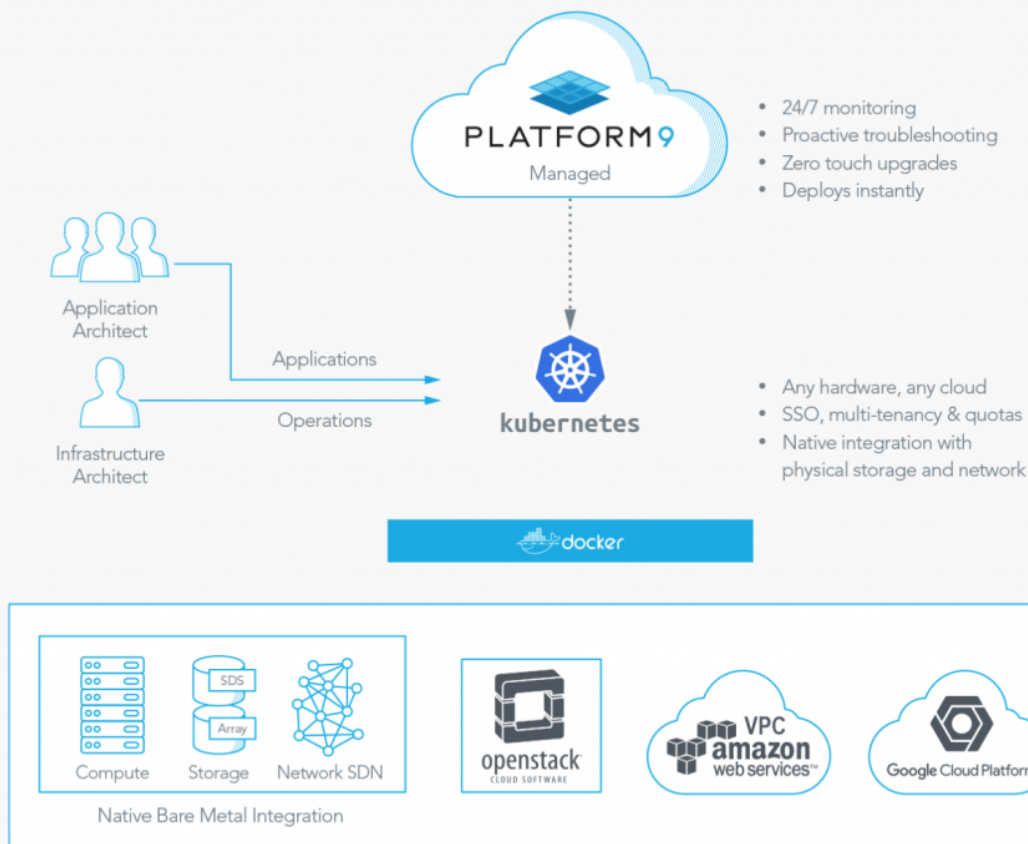
So, what does Platform9 bring to the table with managed Kubernetes? This is the ideal merger of bringing the k8s platform to an organization without the pain and overhead to manage:

- complexity of architecting the infrastructure
- operational overhead and engineering for resiliency
- operational processes to maintain and upgrade the k8s control plane
- risk of embracing the k8s platform

In the same way that Platform9 has simplified and delivered OpenStack using a SaaS model, we are seeing the same opportunity arise for folks to put container orchestration into their IT portfolio. The candidates who have been actively using the beta program for managed Kubernetes were a combination of both traditional virtualization shops, and more forward leaning container and cloud friendly organizations.

Platform9 Managed Kubernetes for Docker

Any hardware, any cloud, anywhere.



Having taken a few test drives with alternative products like the Amazon Elastic Container Service (ECS), I can easily see the attractiveness of Kubernetes, and even more so with a managed service approach. ECS gives the option for containerized workloads on your AWS environment, but it also means:

- IAM integration that can be challenging (or poorly implemented)
- proprietary nature of the container lifecycle on ECS
- “lock-in” which is a result of the proprietary stack and workflows
- one-destination for your infrastructure (build on ECS...for ECS)

Container and cloud friendly organizations are already embracing the value of automation, and will be likely to also have many more open technologies as a part of their IT portfolio.

The full [details on the new offering are available here at the Platform9 website.](#)



Platform9 Announces the Fission Project

The Serverless phase of infrastructure is becoming one that is getting a lot of attention. Many push back on the importance of it mostly out of the fear that it is only going to be available as a cloud-based service, or that running the infrastructure requires a lot of care and feeding which may offset the benefits in some ways.

What if we just want to run code, and not have to worry about all of the tooling underneath the covers? With K8s already on board, there is now an excellent option to provide Functions-as-a-Service (FaaS), or what we know as Serverless infrastructure, using Fission for Kubernetes.

When you installed Docker the first time and typed “docker run”, you saw a little magic happening. We call that the “Aha! moment” where you realize that this is something very cool that is also only the beginning of the possibility for it. Kubernetes takes a lot more care and feeding to get to that point, but once you’re there you are going to realize how easy it is to consume as an abstraction layer above the infrastructure.

Now that Kubernetes is under the covers, you can also add [Fission](#) into the mix and bring another very interesting open source platform into your arsenal of tools.

The challenges being solved by Fission include:

- moving to code-only deployments for development
- Lambda-like functionality on-premises or wherever you have k8s running
- Bring Your Own REST functions capability

Because this is open source, we are already seeing innovation leading up to the official launch. Python and Node.js were built in as out of the box languages to be supported, and soon after the publishing of the [project to GitHub](#) there was a [Pull Request to add C# support when running .NET core](#). That, my friends, is the power of community!

The full [details on the Fission project are available at the Platform9 site](#) and we can look forward to lots of activity in this area in the coming months if my predictions are correct. I sure know that I’ll be digging into it myself!

Thanks to Sirish Raghuram for the briefing on the announcement, and congratulations to the Platform9 team on this very cool release.

Keep watching here as we take a deep-dive into the managed Kubernetes offering over the next

couple of weeks.

[Platform9 - Public Cloud Features for Private Cloud Deployments](#)

UPDATE: Platform9 URL updated to <http://www.platform9.com> and you can also follow them on Twitter [@Platform9Sys](#)

Something new just arrived on the scene this morning. You may have already seen Platform 9 in the past over at their [website](#):



I recently sat down for a presentation and interview with two of the Platform9 co-founders, Sirish Raghuram and Madhura Maskasky. We discussed the overall platform and the evolution of the concept that brought the team together to create this new and exciting startup.

With roots in VMware, the founding team is comprised of product engineering specialists who have a rich history in virtualization and understanding what the barriers are for customers to take the next steps towards a cloud-oriented management model. Not only that, but the investors and advisory team who have come together to bring Platform9 to the launchpad today are a strong group with significant experience across the industry.

You can [view a full bio of the founders at the Platform9 website here](#).

So, let's talk about Platform9!

Solving a Problem

With any product, the key is to be answering a question and solving a problem. The problem that is being faced to day by many organizations is that the barrier to entry for creating self-service deployment and management platforms can be relatively high. There are tools available today such as VMware vCloud and the OpenStack platform which can achieve much of this, but the installation, integration, and ongoing management can be a challenge.

Upgrade? No Problem

Platform9 is being built as a fully managed platform. Updates will be managed centrally and distributed to the appliances on-premises and monitored by the Platform9 team. I asked about how they will work with organizations who are less comfortable with rapid change and CI/CD style deployments. Sirish ensured that they have the ability to work with organizations if there is a strict requirement to adapt to some specific change windows.

One thing that did come up also is that there is no rollback option during upgrades. Effectively, it is a go forward, fix forward methodology. In the even that any issues occur, the Platform9 team will be

on the case to get you back up and running. Recall that this is the additional provisioning layer over and above your current virtualization infrastructure. In other words, any issues would only affect the Platform9 environment and not your underlying infrastructure.

For those who have worked with OpenStack or vCloud, you will already know that upgrading is generally not a friendly or simple process. In my mind this management feature is one of the top sellers.

KVM Now, Docker and VMware Coming Soon!

The underlying virtualization platform on which Platform9 is being built is the very popular KVM hypervisor. In fact, this slide from their announcement will pretty clearly tell you their road map:



At this point KVM will lead for them as the platform of choice, with Docker and VMware vSphere as the next targets. Some may ask why this was the order chosen. After speaking with Sirish, I've learned that it is a clear business decision to lead with a known, widely used hypervisor, and then to build against other largely popular platforms while also taking product engineering challenges.

While some use the phrase "low hanging fruit", we have to see that it is a smart business decision to take working products and knowledge and continue to use the traction on those implementations to engineer the next generation.

I, along with many others, will be anxiously awaiting the Docker and VMware releases which will have road maps laid out over the coming months.

Networking - Nova Ready, Neutron Coming

On the networking side of the product, Platform9 will be launched with Nova network as the networking platform for its OpenStack release. As you can imagine, I was quick to ask about the integration with more advanced networking using OpenStack Neutron which is also on the feature list for a future release. This would bring the ability to tie into extended L2/L3 network features and SDN platforms such as VMware NSX and Cisco ACI.

Nova network is very popular in OpenStack deployments today for many organizations should will make the addition of Platform9 relatively seamless and simple.

Authentication and Authorization

Good news: Platform9 uses the native OpenStack Identity platform, Keystone.

Not quite as good news: Platform9 uses the native OpenStack Identity platform, Keystone.

I really do like the work happening in Keystone, but there can be some challenges with external authentication and authorization depending on your directory services infrastructure. Active Directory is most likely one of the prominent players in enterprise directory services, and there can be some extra work required for AD integration in Keystone.

Luckily, there are lots of tips on how to get AD nicely tied in to Keystone, and the Platform9 team tell me that Active Directory is definitely on their radar as a target feature for connectivity. Secondary to the third-party authentication is that you will have to provision users into the platform as a standalone system. Again, this is something that the team have noted and we hope to see future

enhancements to

Why Platform9?

This is the ultimate question that is asked about any vendor that we evaluate. Is this the right solution? What I've come to know about Platform 9 is that they are building off of a strong history with customer focus. Enabling rapid, self-service provisioning for private clouds is something I'm excited to see.

There is a large gap in the market place today for organizations who may be invested heavily in virtualization, but are having trouble envisioning the next steps to embrace private cloud methodologies and technologies. This looks like it has real potential to lead those customers to the next step in their journey with a managed approach to ensure that it is a smooth transition.

Service discovery and tagging were talked about as big ticket items coming soon which will really ramp up the feature set nicely.

A Look Inside Platform9

For those familiar with the OpenStack Horizon dashboard, you may see some similarities in the interface for Platform9. Since the product is OpenStack based, it is only natural to take the best of the Horizon usability and marry it with the enhancements that have been added by the Platform9 team.

The infrastructure management screen shows an overall view of the Platform9 environment as it connects to the cloud. By showing the authorized nodes on-premises we can see the total view including an aggregate.

Zoom in just a bit further and you see the detailed list of hosts plus the individual resource consumption and number of running instances. Roles are also visible to illustrate what the host does as a part of your OpenStack infrastructure.



Clicking on the **Images** tab shows the available images which can be deployed as running instances in your private cloud. This is also a familiar view for those who have seen OpenStack Horizon, but with some enhancements and also a **Browse Public Catalog** which will show available images that can be imported to the local cloud.



On our **Instances** tab you will see the collective view of all active instances running in your tenant. You can control each instance, or perform tasks on multiple instances in a few simple clicks. The aggregate view is nice and provides a common look and feel to the rest of the product.



User, role, and tenant management is as simple as a few clicks also. You'll see that Platform9 has done most of their customizing inside the software rather than trying to re-invent the interface. They smartly took advantage of the simple, clean OpenStack Horizon dashboard.



Series A Funding Announcement

Not to be outdone by the product release, but Platform9 is also proudly announcing their Series A funding from Redpoint Ventures. The 4.5 Million dollar funding round.

“We believe the private cloud management market is ripe for disruption. Platform9 is one of the most innovative companies in this space, and customer excitement and engagement has been phenomenal,” said Redpoint Ventures Partner Satish Dharmaraj, who has joined Platform9’s board. “Platform9 is uniquely positioned to seize this opportunity with their all-star founding team and cloud-based delivery model.”

This is definitely an exciting day for the team and for many organizations who will be very keen to take a look at how Platform9 may fit into their infrastructure.

My Thoughts on Platform9

Three words: Watch This Company

This is going to be great to watch as the team moves through their public launch. They are currently in beta with 12 customers. I hope to get some time to really test drive the product and share my experiences with you. Thanks to the team for hosting me in a preview session!

The focus of the team, and the product, is on ease of use. Rapid, AWS style of resource deployment. A much needed feature, and one I think will be well received.

Make sure to visit their site at <http://Platform9systems.com> for more information and if you are at VMworld you can drop by and visit them in person at Booth #324.

Read the [full press release on funding here](#) and the [official public announcement for Platform 9 here](#).