

The Little "3" of Open Source Systems Management

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Last year open source analyst Michael Coté of Redmonk coined the term Little Four to describe four up-and-coming open source management vendors and as a foil to the Big Four of systems management.

In the open source space, the 4 names that come up each time ? usually from people I'm talking with even before I say anything ? are: Zenoss, Hyperic, GroundWorks, and openQRM.

This week Qlusters/openQRM announced they would no longer be developing their open source project openQRM and leaving it to the community at large. I guess that leaves the remainder of the band of four to be labeled the "Little 3". This isn't all that surprising. The Qlusters team that originally launched openQRM is gone. Ofer Shoshan is no longer CEO, Qlusters CTO whurley went to BMC, Fred Gallagher went to open source database maker Ingres, and former Red Hat sales exec Don Langley has moved on. So I suspect that the mindset and commitment to further the project has departed with them.

The shame is that the openQRM software is good and hopefully openQRM project lead Matt Rechenburg will continue on with the project. openQRM is an excellent tool for someone who wants to provision testing laboratories and with more maturity be able to provide data center automation to the more demanding data centers (a classic rise by disruptive technology as described here). Perchance Qlusters set their sights too high trying to draft the success of a BladeLogic IPO (BladeLogic was since gobbled up by BMC) and they didn't service a market that VMware has started to abandon as they focus on server consolidation.

With Qlusters turning their attention away perhaps there's an opportunity for someone to lend their support to Rechenburg's efforts. Personally, I have been impressed by Enomaly, a Toronto-based virtualization services vendor, that makes Enomalism a management platform for elastic computing. Maybe there is some synergy between the two projects. At one time the openQRM project was very active fronted by my friend and sometime coconspirator whurley who now jets around as BMC's open source architect (BMC is one of the Big Four). I gave him a call and see if he had any thoughts. Given BMC's anemic open source offerings I thought maybe he would be stepping up to sponsor the project. Of course now being a corporate guy he just chuckled and gave me the official: "No Comment". I guess he's happy to make proprietary software while carrying around an open source title.

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