

# Zenoss upgrades IT monitoring software to vie with Big Four

By Matt Stansberry, Executive Editor  
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IT management software provider Zenoss rolled out a new version of its Enterprise IT Monitoring software yesterday. The Annapolis, Md.-based company provides open source IT monitoring tools for free while charging for its proprietary Enterprise versions.

Zenoss Inc. is one of several smaller systems management vendors challenging the Big Four of the IT management marketplace: IBM, CA, BMC Software Inc. and Hewlett-Packard Co.

The company has had success converting customers from its larger competitors. "People start with a frustration with their current set of tools from the big vendors, they experience some trigger in their environment," said Zenoss CEO Bill Karpovich. "IT managers decide to consolidate infrastructure or move forward with a virtualization project -- some business objective they're trying to support internally -- and they realize their management tools are holding them back."

According to Michael Coté, an analyst at RedMonk, an IT research firm, [Zenoss boasts paying customers](#) such as Motorola, Deutsche Bank Group, Rackspace, VMware, Formica, iStock, CapGemini, Joie de Vivre Hotel Group, Federated Media, UTHSC, Fox Racing and TheLadders.

## Try till you buy with open source

Like many companies in the smaller software provider tier, Zenoss uses its open source tool to get a foot in the door with enterprises.

According to Karpovich, open source software may not be the reason someone buys Zenoss, but it's often the reason IT managers first see the tool. "People get to use the product without a sales guy," Karpovich said.

IT shops upgrade to the commercial tool for four reasons: Premium features, such as managing VMware environments; certification that the tool will run in specific operating systems; expert support; and legal indemnification.

In fact, many IT shops are [hesitant to rely on open source IT management](#) products, despite the mainstream acceptance of Linux and other open source software.

Paul Hubbard, the director of infrastructure services at Minneapolis-based hotel and travel company Carlson Hotels Worldwide, uses the commercial version of Zenoss to monitor server metrics for processor utilization and server I/O on 850 machines. Hubbard said the open source version was not an option given the risk of IP lawsuits.

"We're not in a position to use the open source as a standard," Hubbard said. "In the business world, the regulatory agencies frown on pure open source management tools."

As at many large companies, Carlson has autonomous operating entities within it -- which translates into diverse IT infrastructure. "HP-UX, Red Hat, Windows apps and databases, Oracle, WebLogic, IIS, MVS and even DB2," Hubbard said. "We deploy lots of different things and that complicates the management challenge."

While Hubbard hasn't confirmed that Zenoss will scale to cover every aspect of Carlson's environment yet, he assumes it will work out. "Zenoss is not part of a hardware manufacturer, so you tend to see a nonbiased view towards platforms," Hubbard said. "HP and IBM's offerings certainly can address the needs of one another's hardware, but they tend to be better integrated [into] their own, so Zenoss is more agnostic."

The other aspect of Zenoss that Hubbard like is that the software doesn't require him to commit to a large software suite project. "You can monitor one piece of hardware or scale up significantly and still be able to perform."

The new version of Zenoss' enterprise software includes the following improvements:

- a single, consistent view for monitoring Linux, Unix and Microsoft Windows platforms;
- agentless monitoring for Unix and Linux;
- A new graphical user interface for monitoring Web-apps in cloud computing environments;
- support for VMware vSphere 4 and the new vCenter Server;
- 20 new plug-ins, including Linux, AIX, Nokia Firewalls and Barracuda antispan appliances; and
- a new setup and configuration wizard.

*What did you think of this feature? Write to SearchDataCenter.com's Matt Stansberry about your data center concerns at [mstansberry@techtarget.com](mailto:mstansberry@techtarget.com).*

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