

# Xen's future lies with Oracle and the cloud

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## Abstracts

Although x64 hypervisors are heading for commoditisation, they are not there yet. Even when they reach that stage, there is no guarantee that customers will be able to switch from one to the other easily. That raises an important question about the future of the open source Xen hypervisor and the virtualisation platforms built on it by Xen's three main backers, Citrix, Oracle and Novell. Even the interoperability between their implementations of Xen is limited. Xen's prospects in the enterprise are limited by the squeeze it faces from VMware's dominant ESX/ESXi hypervisor and Microsoft's increasingly competitive Hyper-V hypervisor. Citrix has predicted that eventually its virtual server business will mostly be based on Hyper-V rather than Xen. Oracle is Xen's best chance for a long-term enterprise future, but even Oracle faces a battle to build up its small virtualisation business. Novell also has only a small presence in server virtualisation, and, in any case, may split its attention between Xen and the KVM hypervisor.

Xen has stronger prospects in public clouds, where its open source status makes it popular among service providers. This could shore up Xen's enterprise standing, because interoperability concerns will encourage customers to choose the same virtualisation platform for their premises that public cloud providers are using. The Xen.org development body hopes to cement Xen's position in public clouds by extending Xen from a core hypervisor into a wider open source virtualisation platform. This could increase its appeal to cloud providers and increase portability across Xen clouds, which are currently fragmented across different implementations of the open source code. However, it remains to be seen whether cloud providers will stick with Xen or defect to VMware.

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