



MIS Market Development

Liquidware Labs courts partners and supports user-installed apps with FlexApp

Analyst: [Karin Kelley](#) 21 Nov, 2011

Liquidware Labs has added FlexApp to its product suite to support user-installed applications. The company has also integrated Stratusphere UX with VMware View 5 and added monitoring capabilities for PCoIP performance. In addition, Liquidware has signed a distribution agreement with Arrow Enterprise Computing Solutions, a business segment of Arrow Electronics, and has joined the Cisco VXI Partner Ecosystem. The company is also working with CA Technologies, in particular on Virtual Computing Environment (VCE) desktop virtualization projects. VCE members, including but not limited to VMware, Cisco, EMC and Intel, will be able to leverage Liquidware's Stratusphere, ProfileUnity and the most recent addition to the suite, FlexApp. Eleven-year Citrix veteran Barry Flanagan has joined Liquidware as Senior Director of Strategic Alliances & Systems Integrator Sales Strategy.

The 451 Take

Desktop virtualization is finally starting to look more like a reality. Since IT departments embarked on the VDI journey, user experience and acceptance have always been the main barriers to widespread adoption. With the upcoming release of FlexApp, users will be able to install their own applications, and the pool of viable VDI candidates will grow beyond the call center and deeper into the enterprise. Liquidware's aggressive push to gain strategic and distribution partners is a timely one, as the desktop management market is filled with many formidable competitors. The nearly three-year-old company claims profitability, has never taken in any outside funding and says it has more than 1,000 paying customers. That's a good position to be in for the coming fight.

Liquidware Labs' FlexApp should be generally available before the end of 2011. The product lets users personalize their non-persistent, stateless desktops by installing their own applications. It works like this: a user accesses a pooled, non-persistent desktop through VMware View. When an authorized user begins an application installation, let's say Mozilla Firefox, as Liquidware demonstrated, FlexApp intercepts file installation on the registry and creates a symbolic link, or a set of instructions that point to the actual files that are then stored on a virtual hard disk. Liquidware's ProfileUnity applies the user's profile settings to these applications, which interact natively with the OS while the VM is running. The applications are associated with the user, and installed at the next login. FlexApp should be generally available by the end of the year, and will be in private beta this month.

The Alpharetta, Georgia-based company was founded in early 2009 by J. Tyler Rohrer, founding partner of VDI services firm Foedus (sold to VMware in 2008), and David Bieneman, who sold Vizioncore to Quest Software in 2005. In 2009, Liquidware made two acquisitions of its own, picking up desktop virtualization management vendor vmSight and user virtualization provider Entrigue Systems. The company claims to be profitable, has been privately funded by management since inception and is not seeking outside funding. Liquidware has more than 50 employees, is actively hiring and has additional offices in Chicago and Vich, Switzerland. Partner programs include its Acceler8 channel program and the Technology Alliance Program, which Dell, Citrix and VMware are part of.

Competition

Unlike its two main rivals, RES Software and AppSense, which came to VDI from the terminal services world, Liquidware Labs purpose-built its products to help IT departments assess, build and monitor VDI when it makes sense to do so. The company was early to recognize that not all desktops could or should be virtualized. That said, AppSense's recent partnerships with Lakeside Software and Centrix Software will bring them into assessment and monitoring bakeoffs against Liquidware. The company could also run into performance-monitoring offerings from BlueStripe Software, eG Innovations, Netuitive, Nimsoft and New Relic with its SaaS offering, RPM. Quest chimes in with vFoglight, along with the products it recently obtained in the pickup of VKernel.

With FlexApp, Liquidware will continue to encounter AppSense and its new Strata suite. RES Software came out with its Virtual Desktop Extender technology about a year ago, which also plays here. We're also aware of user virtualization, identity and next-generation desktop management offerings from Avecto, BeyondTrust, DeskStream, Immidio, MokaFive, Unidesk, Viewfinity, Virtual Computer and Wanova – not to mention Citrix, Quest, Symantec and VMware itself. Look for a forthcoming 451 ICE report on desktops as a service.

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