Fujitsu readies radical new optical networking platform equally suited for CSPs and ICPs

Ovum view

Summary

Fujitsu announced on August 17, 2015, a new packet optical networking platform, 1Finity, that physically disaggregates hardware and supports migration to software-centric networks, providing a radical new approach for architecting optical networks. This is a bold move from the historically conservative company that could forever change the competitive landscape.

Pendulum swings from convergence to disaggregation

For the past 15 years ON vendors and network operators have been driving the industry towards convergence of packet and optical functions over a single chassis-based platform. While convergence has improved network efficiency and reduced overall operator capex, the equipment is complex and requires long development and integration cycles, making provisioning of new services a complex and time-consuming task.

Fujitsu has attacked this problem by introducing a totally new platform, 1Finity, that separates optical networking functions into self-contained 1RU products providing transport, lambda, switching, and access functionality. Each product can be managed independently as a system-on-a-blade or can be logically aggregated with a software controller to deliver a broader networking solution and provide a northbound interface to next-gen OSS and SDN controllers. Capacity in each of the product segments is increased by deploying additional 1RU blades. The first products will begin rolling out at the end of 2015.

The industry trend is to disaggregate software from hardware and provide low-cost, generic hardware and open software. Several ON vendors have introduced next-gen products that fit a disaggregated model aimed exclusively at data center interconnect (DCI). However, Fujitsu is going one step further by disaggregating the entire platform, not just the transponder portion. That makes this a unique offering because the platform not only supports the DCI function required by Internet content providers (ICPs) but will also provide an accelerated path to SDN/NFV for traditional telcos and other communications service providers (CSPs).

This strategy is not without risk: because users can cherry-pick the most desirable parts, revenues may be lower than under the traditional model. But Fujitsu is clearly taking the long view that all operators will ultimately build SDN-enabled "open" networks, and the vendor is embracing that idea rather than trying to protect margins on traditional equipment. It will take a while for this to play out, but Ovum believes this will resonate with service providers and revolutionize how optical networks are constructed.

Appendix

Further reading

"The data center interconnect market is booming: adapt or die," TE0006-001078 (June 2015)

Author

Ron Kline, Principal Analyst, Intelligent Networks

ron.kline@ovum.com

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www.ovum.com

analystsupport@ovum.com

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