

**A New Name on the Enterprise Networks Short List: Juniper**

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On Tuesday, Juniper [announced](#) a new commitment to serving enterprise networks. This commitment consists of a targeted market segment, a line of LAN switches, and a series of partnerships with major IT vendors including IBM, Microsoft, and Oracle.

The Juniper Story

Juniper believes network traffic flows are evolving from client-server architectures to traffic driven by software as a service, unified communications, and applications built from federated service oriented architectures. In addition, there is a class of enterprise customers for which the performance, reliability, and security of the network are directly correlated with business success. Juniper's enterprise strategy is to focus on this customer set.

The [portfolio of switches](#) consists of three product lines that in combination with existing Juniper routers and security appliances will fill a variety of network needs across branch office, campus, and datacenter networks.

- EX 3200 Series: 24/48 port 10/100/1000 Fixed Configuration Switches with full and 8 port PoE options as well as optional four port gigabit or two port 10G uplinks. The power supply and fan tray are field-replaceable. An LCD display provides switch identification and basic status information. List price starts at \$4,000 and availability in March 2008.
- EX 4200 Series: Building on the 3200, with hardware redundancy built into the fan tray, power supply, and two stacking options designed to create a "virtual chassis" that can use 10G fiber links to create a single virtual switch across multiple racks or wiring closets. List price starts at \$6,000 and availability in March 2008.
- EX 8200 Series: An 8 and 16 slot 1.6 and 3.2 terabit chassis, highly scalable switch fabrics with line rate 10G port densities of 64 and 128 ports respectively today. Two 16 slot chassis can fit in one rack and these switches can eventually support 100G connections without a switch fabric upgrade. Pricing is TBA and availability is 2H 2008.

Like all Juniper devices, these switches run JUNOS, Juniper's operating system with separation of packet control plane and forwarding plane functions. Juniper is also making a JUNOS SDK available for partners that wish to not only pull sFlow data, but also exert control over packets for security and other access control tasks enabled by packet inspection on every port. High-speed performance, along with space and power savings over competitors are expected to be the primary attractions.

Juniper believes the company can establish tight working relationships with major IT vendors through a combination of adherence to and support for open standards along with a JUNOS SDK that exposes device functions and packet information to partner systems. In addition, the company believes that its focus on network hardware will foster tighter relationships with IT players versus Cisco's acquisitive nature and "cooperation" partnership model.

While Juniper's partner community extends across multiple vendors including voice, video, wireless, and servers, the company highlighted three major IT partnerships at the launch event: IBM, Microsoft, and Oracle.

IBM is expanding its current relationship to increase support from IBM Global Technology Services, including the launch of a set of managed security services and the enhancement of its Network Integration Services portfolio to include designing and deploying the Juniper family routers, switches and appliances. IDC also expects to see integration between Juniper networks and Tivoli identity management in the future.

Microsoft will extend Microsoft Network Access Protection (NAP) to the EX portfolio through the use of standards promoted by the Trusted Network Computing group.

Oracle is looking to Juniper to provide very low latency network connectivity for SOA application server clusters along with integration into Oracle Identity Manager and security features to protect Oracle Database Vault.

Future Outlook

Juniper has long professed the desire to “solve the hardest networking problems” and serve customers that demand a best-of-breed performance, reliability, and security. Despite this, the company’s enterprise product line limited customer conversations and solutions to point products and not to overall network architecture. The EX switch portfolio fills this hole and enables Juniper to bring holistic network solutions to the table. A blank slate enabled Juniper to design a portfolio of switch products that share many of the best features and functions found across the switch market today in form factors that appear to exhibit port densities, scale, and space and power savings expected in a brand new platform.

Juniper’s history and IDC conversations with beta customers indicate the switches deliver technically. IDC will be watching Juniper’s execution on four major fronts over the next year. We are looking for:

1. Design wins in high-profile networks driven primarily by Juniper’s direct touch sales force
2. New network-centric channel partners and system integrators beyond the security channel
3. Juniper IT partners to produce compelling solutions with the JUNOS SDK
4. Product quality consistent with Juniper’s reputation

On #1, beta trials of the 3200 and 4200 are just beginning. On #2, the addition of IBM Global Services is clearly a huge boost in adding partners that can bring a holistic view to the network. In addition to Juniper’s existing partnership base, IDC recommends Juniper also examine partnerships with Arrow or Avnet, both of which serve more enterprise level partners and are sorely lacking in enterprise level networking strategies. Training program incentives are already in place for 2008, and continued marketing air cover will be critical to both empowering Juniper’s existing channel and adding new partners. On #3, the SDK is not yet available to partners, but IDC expects to see signs of progress by the end of this year. On #4 the quality front, any new platform is likely to experience a bug or two, but JUNOS is a mature code base, and IDC expects Juniper and beta customer testing to be rigorous. High performance and flawless quality combined with world-class support and training will enable Juniper to make the argument that Juniper networks are better than the competition rather than simply offering a more attractive price/performance mix.

The majority of network device sales are to each vendor’s installed base of customers. Within Juniper’s target market, the company must seek out network builds for either new networks or network upgrades where the customer is dissatisfied with the technical attributes of the incumbent vendor’s offerings as well as able to incur the switching and other labor costs involved in a dual-vendor or new environment. Despite these challenges, Juniper is not starting from scratch. IDC estimates the company’s enterprise sales force is about 500 people, and Juniper has been actively evolving that force and channel partners from security specialists to people who can have more holistic conversations with customers. IDC believes the enterprise business at Juniper is very well funded with a long-term commitment.

The use of JUNOS as a single code base, updated quarterly, across switching, routing, and security appliances is attractive in terms of maintaining consistency and security across a network. IDC forecasts have assumed the gradual convergence of routing and switching functionality for the last decade. Reliability demands in the near future make the functionality distinction between switching and routing irrelevant. On the hardware side, there are still needs to optimize for WAN vs. LAN processing functions, but the software front is converging quickly.

Despite the convergence of switching and routing software, the notion of and implications of choosing an operating system in a network device are not well understood within the population of enterprise network managers today. IDC believes network managers increasingly require a common interface and baseline functionality across a network of devices with different capacities. This launch, along with the new OS in Cisco's Nexus datacenter switch and other conversations driven by Force 10 and Extreme Networks may make 2008 the year network managers begin to transition from buying boxes to buying device portfolios that share a common code base. In addition, as reliability and latency tolerances continue to tighten, the ability to update, patch, and secure network devices will drive network managers to operating systems and features that support 24/7/365 networks at five nines of availability.

The [network is in a renaissance](#) driven by voice and video, client device growth, business dependence on the network, intelligent networks winning over dumb pipes, and an evolving service oriented IT architecture. In this context, Juniper's entry into the enterprise networks marketplace has been a long time coming, but also well timed to help network managers address new flows and demands on the network. The \$37 billion enterprise networks marketplace is full of fierce competitors, but it is refreshing to see a vendor with Juniper's heritage and financial resources expand and commit to serving one of the most dynamic markets in IT. Juniper, welcome to the short list.

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