JANUARY 31, 2023

RENDEZ-VOUS AUTOUR DE VMS

"Rendez-vous autour de VMS" of January 31 2023 report

The session "Rendez-vous autour VMS" of January 31 was held as a zoom conference with participants from multiple geographical origins. On the agenda: news from VSI and Oracle, x86 demo and to conclude an update on the activity of the VMSgenerations association.

PRESENTATION BY ADAM HOFF NIELSEN (VSI)

Adam Hoff Nielsen (Sales Director EMEA, responsible for sales and customer relations) presented the latest news from VSI, pointing out the importance of listening to users, particularly in France. Reminder of the vision and mission. VSI's capital structure and the relationship with ***Teracloud*** (Danish entity representing VSI in Europe), *21st Century Software*, *Energy Machines* and *Climate Machines*, all subsidiaries of **Johan Gedda**'s investment structure (ex *Paradigm* and co-founder of *Rocket Software*).

A STEP FORWARD IN LICENSING PROCESS

Exclusive ! Adam has officially announced a major change in VSI's licensing policy with the introduction of "renewable subscription" licenses.

In this offer the customer subscribes to recurring 5-year subscriptions, signing a contract every 1, 2 or 3 years. The license keys issued at the beginning of each contract are valid for a period of 5 years.

Briefly, the duration is extended every year for 1 additional year.

Of course, a price increase is possible. The terms and conditions of this offer should be detailed soon by VSI. This new policy allows a customer to have the insurance that his system will be able to operate with a valid license key and the industrial risk (sudden system shutdown) is reduced with a 5-year window visibility.

In the current offering, a time-limited license is only associated with a single key with an end date fixed at the beginning of the subscription and whose validity period decreases by one year each year.

This is a measured but real progress that we were calling for.

It is a fine example of VSI's ability to listen to its customers' needs and to evolve.

We are pleased to have, with the support of the French community, helped VSI to find improvements to the situation created by the withdrawal of perpetual licenses. This does not mean that we have changed our position on this question. We will continue to pursue the issue because there are still many customer cases where the discontinuation of perpetual licensing is a problem that is blocking renewal projects.

UNIVERSAL" TCP/IP ROADMAP

VSI announces version 6.0 of the TCP/IP stack for Integrity servers, developed by VSI. The same source code is used on x86. It integrates SSL 1.1.1 and soon SSL 3.0, requested by many users. Supported on VSI versions of VMS. Announcement imminent.

This version of TCP/IP will also be offered in field test on Alpha in the first quarter of 2023 for customers under support contract.

This consideration for essential network and security needs of the entire installed base (Alpha, Itanium, x86) is an excellent signal, showing that VSI is listening carefully to its installed base.

PROGRESS OF X86 PORTING, ROADMAP TO PRODUCTION

On the x86 side, Adam recalled VSI's R&D objectives: to port the entire VMS ecosystem to x86. The OpenVMS OS, development tools (native *C/C++*, *Cobol*, *Fortran*, *Pascal*, *Basic* compilers), *OpenJDK*, *DecSet* & *Debugger*. *Layered products* and *OpenSource*, third party applications (middleware, databases) and customer application.

A laudable goal, but until we have a precise list of the targeted software, it remains wishful thinking. The page of the VSI site dedicated to partners shows a list of third-party ISVs that remains very generic without any precision on the targeted software or their availability schedule.

The timeline presented for x86 shows for VSI in 2022 the delivery of the OS, clusters and development tools. The year 2023 should see native compilers, middleware and third-party applications as well as a performance target. In 2024 VSI will offer full support for the most popular hypervisors (*VMware*, *KVM* & *Hyper-V*).

For customers and vendor partners, VSI recommends on its slide to start using the x86 version and to set up development environments by 2022. For 2023 it is the replication of the application construction environment and production with native compilers followed by functional tests. 2024 should be devoted to integration testing and production deployment.

The dates given for these milestones seem realistic given VSI's limited resources and the time it will take for users to test VMS on a new architecture before deciding to deploy..

DISAPPEARANCE OF THE "BARE METAL" SOLUTION

It is unfortunate to see here that only hypervisor-based deployments remain on the agenda. The bare metal target has been announced in the roadmaps since 2015, although virtualization was only mentioned as a research option at the time.

ECOSYSTEM

The next x86 release (v9.2 Update 2) is 95% complete, only the *LDAP ACME* agent is missing (according to Dave Sweeney at the last VSI webinar: originally written in *ADA*, which needs to be rewritten in C due to lack of *ADA* compiler on VMS x86).

It is a pity that this was not the opportunity to validate an *ADA* compiler on x86, strongly expected by customers in the world of railways and automatic metros among others.

The page of the VSI site on "layered products" (https://vmssoftware.com/products/list/) allows to know the availability (version, date, minimum level of OS version, architecture and type of license) for the main components of the ecosystem.

On the development tools side, native *C*, *C++* and *Fortran* compilers should arrive soon, followed by *Basic*, *Pascal* and *Cobol* with a lower priority.

The *debugger* is under test and should arrive with v9.2-1.

VMS for x86 is currently built with cross-compilers on *Itanium*. The project to build with native compilers is in its early stages.

The v9.2-1 delivery is announced for the first half of 2023. The strategic goal is sufficient stability to allow customers and ISVs to port their applications to x86. It should support *AMD* processors, offer better performance, most native compilers, new documentation and a Beta version of *OpenJDK*.

COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

A first: following the last VSI webinar on January 10th, VSI compiled a list of questions asked during the webinar and gave answers. Part of it was translated into French and presented by Adam. We welcome this way of doing things which allows to leave a visible trace of the exchanges.

We are however disappointed by the answers concerning the requests for *ADA* and the operation without hypervisor, both rejected on the grounds of insufficient demand or lack of resources.

We recall that *bare metal* operation has been presented in VSI's roadmaps since 2015 and confirmed in 2017 and 2018, as the first target on x86 with a precise description of the servers and adapters envisaged, virtualized mode being only mentioned as a research direction.

If the consideration of *Ada* has always been presented as a pure possibility, the apparent withdrawal of *bare metal* comes like the change in licensing mode, a major revision of the roadmap without real consultation or deep strategic explanation. As mentioned above, we are pleased that VSI is making efforts to better answer to user questions, but there is still a long way to go for better collaboration.

On several occasions, user queries have been handled in an unsatisfactory manner: VSI asks for a list of customer cases and offers to negotiate exceptions. This does not seem to us to meet expectations. This leads to a direct dependency between supplier and individual customers. This may discourage customers and give the wrong overall message.

It is in this mindset that we will continue to focus our efforts on the three current points of divergence (withdrawal of perpetual licensing, no *Ada* compiler, withdrawal of *bare-metal*). Collection of opinions, explanation, search for positive solutions..

DEMONSTRATION

Thilo Lauer, VSI senior technical consultant, showed us live the configuration of a virtual machine on the VirtualBox hypervisor followed by the installation of VMS x86. We could see the simplicity and speed of the process and the update of the boot/install procedures. The setup tips should be gathered in a document / Tutorial soon available.

PRESENTATION BY KEVIN DUFFY (ORACLE)

Kevin Duffy for Oracle presented the latest developments in databases on VMS of the ISV. Description of the exchanges with VSI and the support policy.

The 11.2.0.4 version of the *Oracle Enterprise* database is the last one to be supported on VMS and as such, potentially subject to a particular long-term support policy (Market Driven Support).

For the *Rdb* family of tools, version 7.4 has Premier support until December 2025 and is recommended to all Rdb users.

There were questions about the *Oracle VMS client* that allows access to remote databases. This client is not currently planned for VMS x86, the priority of developments and ports being given to *Rdb*. Interested users need to report to Oracle.

Kevin mentioned an upcoming survey on Oracle usage on VMS to help target VMS user demand.

VMSGENERATIONS ASSOCIATION

VMSgenerations through its president **Miroslaw Szczeblewski** then presented the status of actions in 2022 and the agenda for 2023.

The dialogue with suppliers, the position of spokesperson for the community and the visibility given to the exchanges have enabled the advancement of consolidated demands, probably better than on an individual basis.

The priority given to testimonies and feedback during the "Rendez-vous autour de VMS" events offered by VMSgenerations was recalled.

The "live" demonstration sessions on the development and integration of VMS with the rest of the world were a great success and we wish to continue in this direction.

We keep as objectives in the dialogue with VSI the certification of VMS x86 on *bare server/bare metal*, the availability of an *ADA* compiler on x86, and

the return of the original license mode (perpetual) unilaterally removed without any compensation for the users.

Supporting VMS training/awareness actions for young and new developers is a priority for us and we support all actions aiming at facilitating access to VMS (community license, student kit).

We thank all those who make the effort to follow us even though French is not their native language and we will continue to offer our activity reports in English as well as in French. Several comments on comp.os.vms encourage us to maintain this international opening.

Coming soon on our website : a page dedicated to *Python* on VMS.

Jean-François Piéronne has made available an *LD* image for *Itanium*, based on *Python VSI*, integrating *Python V2* compatible modules, such as *rdb*, vms

VMSgenerations is preparing its general assembly, which will be an opportunity to renew the board. We encourage members who want to get involved and act on the actions of the association to join us to carry further the projects that motivate them.

A next message will be published to describe the next general assembly, ongoing projects and the possibilities to join the board.

The office of the association is listening to users on the topics they want us to address, and more broadly on any contribution, reaction or suggestion so that the activity of the association is the reflection of the expectations of all.

Do not hesitate to write to us at the following e-mail address : contact@vmsgenerations.fr