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Azul bolsters Intelligence Cloud analytics with support for any Java virtual machine

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Introduction

Four years after landing a \$340 million private equity infusion, Azul continues to leverage its expertise to optimize the efficiency and performance of applications running on its Java virtual machines. As cloud deployments grow and applications become distributed across a wider range of systems and venues, real-time visibility into software vulnerabilities is critical. The vendor's Azul Intelligence Cloud analytics offering is designed to save time and increase the productivity of DevOps teams — on any JVM.

THE TAKE

Azul has been focused exclusively on selling JVMs. Now via its Azul Intelligence Cloud, the vendor can add value to any organization running any JVM (suppliers often either mandate or only support a particular JVM), which should vastly increase the addressable market for its product. As compute-intensive workloads proliferate, Azul has new chances to partner with technology specialists, independent software vendors and systems integrators. Concern surrounding Oracle Corp.'s pricing and licensing regime continues to create opportunities for Azul to swoop in.

Details

The company recently added support for Oracle JDK and any OpenJDK-based JVM from any provider or distribution to its Azul Intelligence Cloud, its Java cloud analytics offering. In addition to Oracle, this includes Amazon Inc., Eclipse, Microsoft Corp., Red Hat and others. Azul offers insight from production Java runtime data that can be deployed to enhance developer productivity.

Intelligence Cloud includes Azul Vulnerability Detection to eliminate false positives by identifying and prioritizing known security vulnerabilities, while Code Inventory helps identify unused and dead code by detailing what custom and third-party code is actually run. It provides continuous detection for Java applications in production, enabling DevOps teams to triage new vulnerabilities during events such as Log4j.

The vendor notes that teams have often added features but not retired old code, making maintenance more difficult and increasing the risk of unexpected behavior or exposure to vulnerabilities — for example, as a result of M&A. Whereas Azul Intelligence Cloud is focused on improving DevOps productivity, its OpenJDK-based Azul Platform Core and Platform Prime offerings are designed to lower Oracle Java licensing costs (Azul Zulu is its Oracle Java replacement), optimize cloud costs, and boost resiliency and performance (Azul Zing JVM is designed for enhanced performance).

Azul takes advantage of Java's prowess in handling transactions and business logic at the runtime layer, where it has built a fast compiler into Azul Platform Prime JVM to manage the most demanding workloads. The vendor asserts that it currently employs AI internally to curate its own code base and anticipates that as AI, including large language models, begins to be deployed in Java frameworks, it will have a role to play.

The company claims that Oracle's ongoing Java pricing and licensing changes continue to deliver opportunity for its alternatives. It says customer bookings for its Azul Platform Core increased 49% in 2023, with 36% new Core customers, while Azul Platform Prime bookings grew 30% year over year. Azul Platform Core has been generating 40% of revenue, while Azul Platform Prime accounts for most of the rest. Most new customers are rotating off of Oracle Java SE or other non-Oracle JDK distributions.

Azul reports that Asia-Pacific bookings increased 37% and Europe, Middle East and Africa bookings grew 69% in 2023 versus the prior year. Thirty-six new channel partners joined the vendor's PartnerConnect program (it now has more than 100), and the number of new customers doing business via Azul's channel partners increased by 67%. Its products are now available on AWS and Google Cloud marketplaces, enabling customers to leverage their committed cloud spending, consolidate software costs, and simplify procurement.

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