

# ChannelWeb NETWORK

## Savvis Hears A Symphony With Integrated Cisco UCS

By Chad Berndtson, ChannelWeb, Electronically reprinted from Tuesday December 22, 2009

Cisco (NSDQ:CSCO) has promised that its Unified Computing System (UCS) will transform what solution providers can offer to enterprises interested in virtualized, cloud-ready data center infrastructure. At least one solution provider, Savvis, likes what it sees.

Savvis (2009 VAR500 rank No. 93) earlier this month said it would begin offering a virtual private cloud platform based on Cisco's UCS for enterprise customers. The platform, called Savvis Symphony and formerly known as Project Spirit, will also be deployed using Cisco's Unified Delivery Service, which in effect pools the resources of multiple data centers.

Symphony will draw on Savvis' 28 data centers all around the world, according to the integrator, and is the culmination of a years-long collaboration with Cisco that found Savvis beta testing the Cisco UCS before its March release.

"We were part of the beta story for the first part of the year and we like what the platform offers in terms of various features," said Savvis CTO Bryan Doerr in an interview. "It's a platform designed for virtualization, and that's representative of a major trend in the industry right now, which is more horizontal aggregation of what were formally siloed components. Some vendors are looking to package more fully integrated capabilities — they thought about where the supply chain is going — and the UCS is an example of that trend."

Doerr said Savvis was among a group of solution providers who were discussing

UCS — formerly known as Project California — with Cisco as early as 2007.

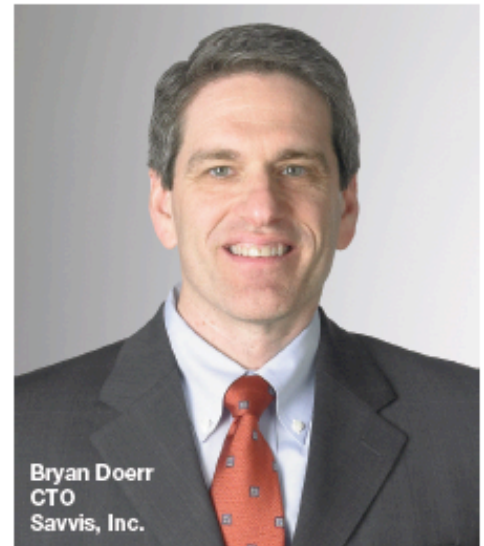
As of mid-December, the company has two Symphony customers in private beta, he said.

"There isn't that much out there that gives you the features we're talking about," Doerr suggested. "The question is: are we going to go with a platform that's commodity hardware-based or are we going to be higher grade hardware-based and go after market value and features? Do a lot of the solutions out there give you more market value, or are they just more expensive platforms? Enterprise buyers demand more control and more assurance than commodity grade hardware can provide these days. That's a key part of our offer."

Doerr said the UCS stood out from a "fairly limited field of choices" as Savvis looked to complete Project Spirit. He said Savvis considered virtualization upstart Egenera and its "data center in a box" OEM relationship with Dell, and also eyed data center solutions from HP (NYSE:HPQ) (specifically the HP BladeSystem Matrix), Liquid Computing and others.

But Cisco made the most sense, he said, because Savvis has a longstanding relationship with the networking titan and earlier versions of Savvis' Project Spirit were based on Cisco's Nexus line of data center switches anyway.

Doerr cited financial enterprises, media and entertainment companies, and also other Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) and Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS) providers as



Bryan Doerr  
CTO  
Savvis, Inc.

some of the best opportunities for Symphony in 2010.

At this year's VMWorld 2009 conference, Savvis vice president of R&D David Shacoichis told ChannelWeb that one of the next steps for the project is to publish APIs so customers can use third-party tools as well.

The arrival of UCS was one of the year's big Cisco stories, and earlier this fall Cisco began to expand the options for how UCS — both in its B-series blade server version and C-series rackmount server version — moves through the channel.

Most recently, Cisco added Avnet as a distributor for Cisco data center products, including UCS, citing Avnet's "unique position" among storage and data center VARs in the channel.