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Stratus demonstrates major engineering breakthrough in software-based continuous availability

Continuous availability for symmetric multiprocessing (SMP) servers

MAYNARD, Mass., Sept. 29, 2009 – Stratus Technologies, The Availability Company, today announced that its Avance™ engineering group has broken through the barrier preventing fault-tolerant software from fully utilizing high-performance SMP servers. Stratus' breakthrough creates a universe of new options for companies that need an ultra-reliable processing platform to run demanding applications in a flexible, economical software-based environment. The company previewed this prototype software at invitation-only demonstrations in San Francisco and at its Maynard, Mass. headquarters earlier this month.

This technology can deliver continuous availability on general-purpose Intel servers. Previous efforts to deliver true continuous availability and fault tolerance in software have been limited to non-SMP server architectures and were plagued by performance problems.

A lack of SMP support in all current software fault-tolerant products, regardless of vendor, limits their deployment to applications which utilize a maximum of one processing CPU core per server (or virtual server). This limitation of software fault tolerance has loomed large with rapid advancements in multi-core processor technology and the proliferation of virtualization technology throughout the enterprise.

“Full-function continuous availability delivered through software will fundamentally change the way availability is evaluated, purchased, implemented and managed,” said Tom Joyce, vice president and general manager, Stratus Avance Business Group. “Today, the value of putting the power of eight or more processor ‘cores’ against critical application workloads is completely negated when you select software-based fault tolerance to ensure availability. Stratus engineers have made definitive progress overcoming this serious shortcoming. We have more work to do before this product is ready for market, but it is on our roadmap. We are excited to bring this product to market in the future.”

Supporting SMP with a lockstep approach requires precise synchronization of multiple independent processing cores, which only hardware solutions can achieve in real time. Stratus’ prototype software does not require the same degree of real-time processor determinism for SMP, nor does it have the very high processing overhead of existing software products. The Stratus approach is also compatible with para-virtualization technology which enhances I/O performance in the virtualized environment. Para-virtualization eliminates the need to emulate hardware devices via software. With SMP support and improved performance, software-based fault tolerance can use all available multi-core processing power to run business-critical and mission-critical applications on general-purpose x86 servers.

Stratus is an acknowledged leader in availability solutions with its fault-tolerant servers and high availability software:

- The Company’s ftServer systems provide fault tolerance for traditional and virtualized mission critical enterprise applications with nearly 99.9999 percent reliability and no failover, data loss or data corruption.
- Stratus Avance HA software transforms ordinary x86 servers into a virtualized high-availability computing platform. Avance makes 99.99 percent availability accessible to a wide spectrum of applications, particularly in the SMB market, at a very affordable cost and with none of the complexity of high-availability clusters.
- Avance CA will extend this simplicity and affordability to essential applications vital to small and medium businesses, as well as remote locations for Fortune 1000 organizations.

About Stratus Technologies

Stratus Technologies focuses exclusively on helping its customers keep critical business operations online without interruption. Business continuity requires resiliency and superior availability throughout the IT infrastructure, including virtual environments. Stratus delivers a range of solutions that includes software-based high availability, fault-tolerant servers, availability consulting and assessment, and remote systems management services. Based on its 29 years of expertise in product and services technology for total availability, Stratus is a trusted solutions provider to customers in manufacturing, health care, financial services, public safety, transportation & logistics, and other industries. For more information, visit www.stratus.com.

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