PLUMgrid funding advances efforts in software-defined networking

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(Phys.org) -- Tall order: Building company leadership in its startup years for the startup future of a new platform for networking. Founders of a California-based PLUMgrid want to do just that, with its focus on software-defined networking (SDN). PLUMgrid announced on Wednesday that it has raised $10.7 million in Series A funding from Hummer Winblad and US Venture Partners. "The networking industry is experiencing a major shift as infrastructure becomes software-driven," said Lars Leckie, managing director, Hummer Winblad Venture Partners. The funding comes a year after the company initially raised $2 million.

SDN is defined as a technology that separates the control plane from the data plane in network switches and routers. Under SDN, the control plane is implemented in software in servers separate from the network equipment and the data plane is implemented in commodity network equipment. The example often given is the communications protocol OpenFlow, which allows the path of network packets through the network of switches to be determined by software running on multiple routers.

PLUMgrid intends to develop SDN technologies but it is not yet clear what their products will be. PLUMgrid CEO Awais Nemat said the company will reveal its product offerings at the "end of this year or early next year." The eventual revelations will have something to do with network virtualization and will be based on SDN. The company will be promoting its network virtualization solutions with the message to its

customers that their solutions will enable businesses to manage physical, virtual and cloud datacenters with greater efficiency.

With networking as the glue between compute and storage and applications in a cloud infrastructure, it too has to go the way of those other IT components - it has to be virtualized, according to Nemat. "When it is not virtualized, it is getting in the way of business," he says. "So all the promises of virtualization delivered in compute, storage and applications have to be delivered again, in networking."

As vague as the company product plans seem, Nemat has noted that the ecosystem, leave alone his company, is still quite young. Network virtualization is just starting out, he said, and one can expect a lengthy process for any transformations. Even though the silicon and systems ecosystems are well-established, he added, the software and the applications that go on top "are a big void, and that's where we fit in. That's the problem we are trying to solve."

Attention is to travel from network systems to silicon and software, Nemat said, and the $40 billion opportunity is divided into separate multibillion dollar silos with particular product requirements and customer segments.

PLUMgrid hopes to be the company that sits at the center of the convergence that is happening with compute, virtualization and networking, commented Alex Williams in TechCrunch "If it can do it then a $40 billion market awaits."

PLUMgrid CEO Nemat co-founded the company in 2011. The company is headquartered in Sunnyvale, California.

 More information: www.plumgrid.com/