Oracle focuses on 5G charging and containerization in latest Billing and Revenue Management release

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Summary

In late April Oracle released the latest version of its flagship monetization product, Billing and Revenue Management (BRM). The latest release includes several upgrades including the full containerization of the product, full compatibility with 5G networks and enhanced charging capabilities to support 5G business models.

BRM is now 5G-ready

In late April Oracle released the latest version of its flagship monetization product, Billing and Revenue Management (BRM), building on capabilities released in the October 2019 update.

In the October release of BRM, Oracle debuted cloud-native capabilities, including introducing a microservices architecture and 20 containerized images using Docker. The latest release builds on the last update, with Oracle containerizing the remaining elements of BRM including the Elastic Charging Engine and Offline Mediation Controller; making the product now fully containerized.

This is an important update as CSPs are increasingly moving elements of their revenue management systems to the cloud and are looking to cloud-native features like containers to improve system scalability. Moreover, open source technologies like Docker and Kubernetes are becoming the go-to technologies for CSPs looking to take advantage of cloud-native capabilities like containers for their revenue management systems. From a competitive standpoint, containerization using open source is becoming the industry standard with competitors like Netcracker and Optiva also introducing similar capabilities for their products.

In addition to improvements to the architecture and supporting technologies, Oracle has announced that BRM is also officially 5G-ready and aligned with 3GPP standards release-15. At the core of this is the upgraded convergent charging system which includes the elastic charging engine which allows CSPs to rate and charge for any attribute or metric and the “In Memory Charging Grid”. The “In Memory Charging Grid” uses HTTP/2 protocols and diameter connections to enable CSPs to charge for 4G and 5G services within a single system. This capability is key as CSPs try to find a balance between monetizing the existing network and supporting new 5G use cases. Finally, the convergent charging system also supports non-standalone and standalone 5G core networks.

Being able to rate and charge for any metric or attribute is a capability that is essential to the monetization of 5G services and the new business models that 5G will enable. An Omdia survey of 125 CSPs found that only 25% of CSPs anticipate consumer-focused business models to be the biggest revenue driver for 5G. Instead, CSPs expect to derive much of their 5G revenue from smart cities, governments, B2BX, and industry vertical business models. Many of these use cases will require the support of unique rating and charging parameters, such as charging based on device type, or location, or for very small increments and thus having a flexible and highly scalable charging system like Oracle’s Elastic Charging Engine is key to supporting these business models.

Overall, the enhancements to BRM are well-timed for the market and Oracle’s competitors have made similar product updates in the last year. Nonetheless, vendors seem to be ahead of the curve in terms of offering future-ready monetization solutions. Omdia anticipates growth in the revenue

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management market to be relatively modest for vendors over the next four years with much of the investment only beginning in 2022 once wide-scale implementations of 5G have begun.

Appendix

Further reading

"Oracle announces cloud-native deployment option for BRM," SPT001-000087 (October 2019)

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