

NETWORKWORLD

10 hot data-center virtualization startups to watch

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Data-center [virtualization](#) is about much more than servers these days. Everything from storage to applications to entire infrastructure stacks are being virtualized by startups seeking to push virtualization throughout the entire IT stack.

Or, to borrow from Marc Andreessen, virtualization is eating the data center.

The startups in this roundup are well-funded, with the exception of brand-new ones just out of stealth, but even those have seasoned founders and compelling products under developments. The ventures detailed here represent the future of the data center, offering everything from software-defined servers to software-defined block storage to managed [hybrid-cloud](#) services and infrastructure.

Sea Street

What they do: Provide an AI-based autonomous-operations platform

Year founded: 2012

Funding: \$41 million raised in two rounds of funding; investors not disclosed.

Headquarters: Wakefield, Mass.

CEO: Harley Stowell, who previously was Cisco's CTO, Worldwide Service Provider Cloud & Managed Services

Problem they solve:

Delivering enterprise application services and the cloud infrastructure that supports them is a labor-intensive, error-prone, difficult-to-scale task.

Sea Street argues that in order to scale to meet end-user demands, all applications and all IT services will eventually need to be rendered as services operating in converged virtual infrastructure.

How they solve it:

Sea Street's AI-based autonomous operations platform, StratOS, enables enterprises and service providers to deliver services as fully autonomous, closed loop operations.

StratOS manages both applications and multi-cloud infrastructure based on policy, and it continuously creates, updates and programs system architectures to meet the needs of the applications and the policies.

StratOS is built on designable micro-intelligences that the startup calls Objectives. These are goal-seeking, intelligent software objects. They interoperate and cooperate to create autonomous services, compound services and even division-level services operations. Sea Street describes Objectives as being like bees in a hive: a set of Objectives run a service while a swarm of Objectives runs an enterprise. They enable organizations to automate the enterprise element by element, a service at a time.

Competitors include: BMC, itential, SaltStack, Chef

Customers include: Cox Communications

Why they're a hot startup to watch: CEO Harley Stowell's background at Cisco is a big plus, as is the fact that he joined Cisco by selling his previous startup, LineSider Technologies, to them. Plus Sea Street as \$41 million in funding and a major customer in Cox Communications.