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**GRID COMPUTING**

**By Rob Daly, Editor**

### **Zircon Computing Improves Load Balancing**

NEW YORK-To improve the performance of its grid-enabling middleware, dubbed Zircon Software Product Suite, Zircon Computing has included a separate service pool for the platform's internal load balancer in version 3.1, which was made generally available at press time.

The new capabilities enable "client-server co-location," says Ron Guida, director at Zircon Computing. "It helps distribute those applications or functions across public, private or hybrid clouds," he says. "It is a big step."

In addition, Zircon has extended the platform's thread pool and raised its high-water mark.

"As the application or functionality is distributed across the various hardware platforms, other systems tend to have a performance threshold, so if a set of processor cores, or threads within those cores, become non-responsive, they tear down the job," says Guida. "That is because they have a limited threshold for their thread pools and high water marks."

However, if Zircon distributes an application across a set of cores that become non-responsive, the platform will redistribute what was slated to be distributed to those cores to the rest of the responsive threads and cores rather than tearing down the job.

Other improvements in the new release include new management console functionality, which can be either Web-based or command-line format, according to Guida; new code samples; and enhanced documentation.

The platform consists of three major components. The zNet module is a distributed services framework for the reliable service delivery of multi-cast communications and real-time load balancing and is the core of the suite, says Guida. The zFunction module breaks down the compute-intensive

aspects of an application and distributes them across any potential computing platforms that the client wants. "That could be multi-threaded machines in a private, public or hybrid compute cloud," says Guida. The final module, zExec, lets users convert applications to run in a parallel-processing environment using the same distribution across the same platforms.

Currently, the platform is in production in two of the top five global banks, claims Guida. "We are in six or seven departments of one bank and eventually we will be part of its core infrastructure," he says. "In the other bank, we are working to deploy the platform trading area by trading area."

In typical deployments for financial services organizations, the vendor finds itself implementing greenfield deployments and not displacing any legacy grid management applications, according to Guida.