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August 26, 2013
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The interest in software-defined networking (SDN) will translate into a global market worth \$3.52 billion by 2018, says Transparency Market Research. The market research firm's new "Software Defined Networking (SDN) Market - Global Industry Analysis, Size, Share, Growth, Trends, and Forecast, 2012 - 2018" report predicts SDN spending worldwide will grow at a compound annual growth rate of 61.5% from 2012 to 2018.

The increasing need for efficient infrastructure and mobility, as well as the popularity of cloud services, will drive this growth, according to the report.

Transparency Research cites three main markets for SDN: enterprises, cloud services providers, and telecommunications services providers. Enterprises represented 35% of the SDN market in 2012. However, cloud service providers are expected to be the fastest growing market segment throughout the years the report covers. Transparency Research says that SDN's ability to reduce opex and capex while enabling the delivery of new services will spearhead its use by cloud service providers.

Cloud provisioning and orchestration products currently dominate the global SDN market, the report states. SDN switching held the second largest revenue share of the SDN market in 2012. SDN products and applications also will be used to design, optimize, secure, and monitor the network, the market research firm predicts.

North America currently is the largest market for SDN technology, thanks to a high degree of standardization and favorable regulatory initiatives. Not surprisingly, Asia Pacific is expected to be the fastest growing region during forecast period, fueled by the increasing adoption of BYOD practices in China, India, and Australia.

In this early stage, the SDN industry is fragmented, the report asserts. Multiple players have moved to address different categories including hardware providers, software developers, and service providers. Transparency Research names Cisco, IBM, NEC, Juniper Networks, Alcatel-Lucent, VMware, HP, Google, Big Switch Networks, Arista Networks, Brocade Communications Systems, Verizon Communications, and Intel among the primary players.

"Software Defined Networking (SDN) Market - Global Industry Analysis, Size, Share, Growth, Trends, and Forecast, 2012 - 2018" segments the global SDN market into users, products (including SDN switching, SDN controllers, cloud provisioning and orchestration, and others such as security and services), and region.

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