OpenSFS Support Working Group

Charter

The OpenSFS Support Working Group (SWG) meets regularly and is responsible for reviewing status of open issues, refining priorities, and overall strategic planning for the support model being proposed by OpenSFS. The Support Working Group is also responsible for providing the Technical Working Group members with information they need, such as support performance metrics, in order to help plan the evolution of OpenSFS.

High Level Requirements for OpenSFS

To put forth a support model for an OpenSFS release, requirements for the release, support, feature development, and the business model must be defined. Requirements discussed by the SWG are as follows:

OpenSFS Lustre Release. OpenSFS members will have access to an OpenSFS Lustre release, that has the following attributes:

- Is RedHat based and vendor neutral.
- Is production quality.
- Contains all of the completed features for which OpenSFS has commissioned work on.
- Contains all of the patches which are required to support OpenSFS members.
- Contains additional Lustre and Lustre related tools which the OpenSFS members wish to see included.
- Is supported by one or more OpenSFS vendors, as commissioned by OpenSFS.
- Is based from the community canonical Lustre tree, which is at present hosted by Oracle. This is not a fork of the Lustre code but rather a distribution instance.
- Features and patches applied to the OpenSFS tree are pushed upstream to the canonical Lustre tree.
- To receive support for the OpenSFS release, one must be running the release exactly as distributed by the OpenSFS distributor, plus approved critical patches on that vendor's supported patch list, for the given release.
- User and administrator documentation exists, including installation instructions and dependencies.

Note: The above requirements meet the production OpenSFS Lustre release requirements. They don't speak to, and weren't meant to speak to, a "development branch" of Lustre.

OpenSFS Lustre Support. OpenSFS members will have access to support for an OpenSFS Lustre release, and that support has the following attributes:

- Level III support is provided.
- A bug tracking package will be used to track bug and feature work.
- A discussion alias will be used for OpenSFS community discussion.

OpenSFS Lustre Features. OpenSFS will commission Lustre and Lustre related feature work, which has the following attributes:

- The features will be tested against the OpenSFS release and in the available OpenSFS test environment.
- The features will be submitted for review and landing in the OpenSFS release.

Lustre Release and Support Business Model. OpenSFS members will have access to an OpenSFS Lustre release, that has the following attributes:

- There exists a common service level agreement, SOW, and RFP for this support.
- There exists a common pricing for providing this support.
- Members sign contracts with, and pay support costs, directly to OpenSFS release support providers.

Logical Outcomes and Implications of the Above – Thoughts separate from the above requirements (and just for a sanity check)

- While there could potentially be multiple entities that provide support for the OpenSFS Lustre release, only one entity will be commissioned to produce the release, at any point in time.

- If a commercial vendor takes on producing the OpenSFS release, they will either have to make that release their standard release (or vice versa), or that vendor will need to produce (and presumably support) two distinct releases, or baseline their own release on the OpenSFS release

- While it's possible for one entity to produce the distribution and another entity to support it, in practice that's not desirable as it benefits the OpenSFS members to have accountability between the producing and the supporting of a release. This will better serve OpenSFS users as it will be more economical for the entity to produce a higher quality release (and documentation) in order to minimize support costs.

Questions not addressed above, but we think that the expectations should be clearly enumerated are:

- How much flexibility is given to OpenSFS users to apply their own patches to OpenSFS releases without impacting their support eligibility?
- What are the EOL requirements for OpenSFS releases? Are OpenSFS users compelled to upgrade to newer releases within a certain timeframe?
- OpenSFS will need to be specific about which Linux distro versions are officially supported for both servers and clients. This (along with the open-ended "other useful stuff") can greatly increase the costs associated with delivering on these requirements.

Feedback from potential support vendor

During our working group discussions, we got feedback from a potential support vendor which we wanted to include in this draft of the white paper since these opinions influenced the proposed support models.

It is the belief of this vendor that they must work with the end customers or partners directly, rather than through OpenSFS. This is the only way they can provide quality support and be able to be accountable for that support. Supporting an OpenSFS release will not be possible, as they intend to support their own Lustre releases. They believe that each customer or partner may need something slightly different, and that the customer is best served by working directly with the support vendor to negotiate the support package that best meets the customer's needs.

Support Model Proposals

Considering the above input in addition to the SWG's experience with different software support models, the SWG proposes the following support model for consideration.

Open Source Model

In this model, OpenSFS manages a development tree with the latest fixes and features produced by OpenSFS members and contracts. OpenSFS would produce tar-ball releases from this tree, and provide free support on their own bug tracker. Commercial vendors might choose to use this tree as the base for new OpenSFS features, and would provide commercial support for their own releases directly to their customers.

Support, in this model, is best effort and provided by the OpenSFS members. Again, the idea is support is provided similar to how other open source products are supported.

Comment [pgh1]: This section will be reworked once the requirements are agreed to.