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On the Radar: Rocket Aldon Lifecycle Manager provides ALM and DevOps for enterprise software development

A comprehensive solution for enterprise users

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Summary

Catalyst

Rocket Aldon Lifecycle Manager (Rocket ALM) is an application lifecycle management (ALM) solution that extends to DevOps automation and is applicable to a range of platforms. Rocket acquired ALM specialist Aldon in 2011 and has since focused on delivering ALM and DevOps to IBM i-centric environments. IBM's midrange IBM platforms running IBM Power CPUs run the core functions of a vast number of businesses. These businesses might be running Cobol or RPG applications, but now they're service-enabling these applications, or they're creating web, mobile, and Windows user interfaces around them, or they're moving to a hybrid cloud environment. Whatever stage they are at in their digital transformation, they need to manage the application lifecycles of all their environments, both heritage and new technology.

Rocket ALM covers the entire range of ALM processes as well as DevOps processes. It offers end-to-end support and automation, including keeping track of the business issues arising and tying this to programming projects; managing the source code; doing the builds; moving things from development, to test, to QA, to production; then packaging, deploying, and installing the code.

Key messages

- Rocket ALM is a comprehensive ALM and DevOps solution that manages both host-based code as well as open distributed code with consistent processes.
- It is integrated with contemporary tooling. For example, it can use Git for version control and Rocket for automating host code promotion process, executable builds, deployments, and installations.
- Rocket ALM is available in multiple editions, from IBM i and Power systems to editions for Windows and Linux.
- It simplifies audit compliance for IT and regulatory requirements.

Ovum view

IBM's midrange customers have applications that have been built over decades, and because these are now being modernized, they need to manage everything that goes on around these applications as well as managing the core applications themselves. The Rocket ALM portfolio of solutions is comprehensive and flexible, offering support for multiple technologies and development methods as well as the automation of modern DevOps processes.

Not surprisingly, a major strength is the visibility it offers into the processes involved with documentation coming directly out of the system that is fed directly to the audit team. It makes it easy to see the move into production process and the rules that govern the process as well as who has the authority to make decisions on the path and what decisions are made.

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Recommendations for enterprises

Why put the Rocket ALM your radar?

Rocket sees the key value proposition for its solutions as providing overall process management, automation, and enforcement throughout the lifecycle of a process. The solutions are particularly aimed at IBM i series users, but other editions target a range of platforms.

The solution can be all-encompassing, but it is also extremely easy to integrate other third-party solutions into parts of the lifecycle. For example, Rocket ALM has software tools for managing a backlog of issues, or users can integrate it with something such as Jira, where users can track the business needs system-wide, or ServiceNow, or another IT service management (ITSM) solution. Similarly, if clients wish to use Git or Subversion for version control, they can and then the lifecycle manager will manage the process of getting the builds done and packaging things up, deploying them, and then moving them through the appropriate lifecycle.

This flexibility coupled with the comprehensiveness of the solutions makes it highly practical and appropriate for a wide range of customers.

Highlights

Rocket ALM is an entire multiplatform DevOps automation system that automates the code promotion process, executable builds, deployments, and installations. The product automates the software development workflow so that service requests and incident reports are routed to the right people, and requirements are checked off enabling developers to better manage resources and increase productivity. The product provides full visibility into the development process at any level, within any role, at any time.

Rocket ALM manages host-based code as well as distributed code with consistent processes. The product is pre-integrated with contemporary tooling to enable customers to use Git for version control and Rocket for automating host code promotion processes, executable builds, deployments, and installations. Other out-of-the box integrations include the popular IDEs Eclipse and Microsoft Visual Studio.

The DevOps component provides a single point of control with a dashboard that provides insight into all activities and a database to view IT assets and monitor any changes to them. A DevOps Portal gives administrators a web-based reporting tool that enable the generation of ad hoc or historical reports.

Rocket ALM provides point-and-click package promotion, integrity assurance, package deployment and redeployment, build automation and history, and traceability. There is also a mobile interface that enables the automatic deployment of files to any number of target servers as the files progress through the lifecycle.

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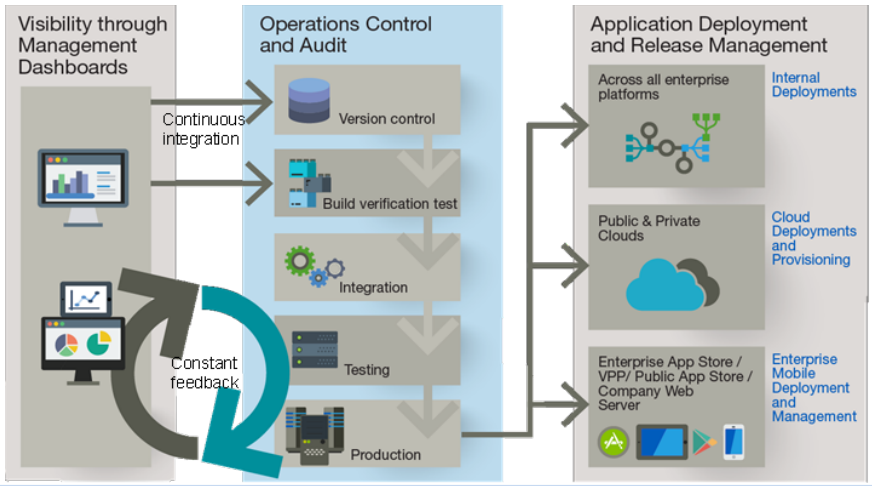
Figure 1: Rocket ALM in the development lifecycle



Source: Rocket

To handle the complexity involved in managing multiple components and technologies, Rocket built a metadata layer that enables customers to define groups of applications, releases, tasks, and components.

Figure 1 shows the web user interface where customers can see a group application release structure. They can see all the versions or all the builds that they've done and can deploy these or drill into individual tasks. Developers need only to commit their changes and the system will package everything, run the build, import the build results, deploy the build results out to where they need to run, and install them. This could also be in a cloud environment.

At this point, the DevOps tool takes over, taking the packages, pushing things out to where they need to run, installing them, and then communicating back exactly what's happening. It will send out email notifications to let people know that the deployment was successful or not and offering the ability in any moment to perform rollback (kill the change and roll out the previous release).

For compliance and audit reporting, Rocket ALM provides auditors with automation and process tracking from the first user request to final deployment of these updates. Customized dashboards and reports provide details of activities performed, including who performed them, when, and (most importantly) why.

Background

Rocket Software is a privately held software development firm founded in Boston in 1990. The company is now headquartered in Waltham, Massachusetts. Key staff include Andy Youniss (president and CEO), Anjali Arora (CPO), and Jay Leader (SVP customer success).

Current position

The company has 10 million end users, and 15,500 enterprises using its software. Rocket employs more than 1,000 engineers in offices around the world. Customers include IBM, Epicor, Ellucian, Fidelity Investments, Fujifilm, Fujitsu, Cornell University, Scotiabank International, Atlassian, Dell/EMC, and HP. On the roadmap are plans to offer expanded integration with open source solutions.

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Data sheet

Key facts

Table 1: Data sheet:

Product name	Rocket Aldon Lifecycle Manager (IBM i Edition); Rocket Aldon Lifecycle Manager (Enterprise Edition); Rocket Aldon Lifecycle Manager (MV Edition); Rocket Aldon Community Manager; Rocket Aldon Deployment Manager; Rocket Aldon Lifecycle Manager Ops Portal; Rocket Aldon Report Manager	**Product classification**	ALM and DevOps solution
Version number	Each component has a different version number	**Release date**	Iterative and agile. Small releases every 30 to 45 days. Major releases once a year.
Industries covered	All. But most significant are financial services/insurance, manufacturing, retail and wholesale trade	**Geographies covered**	North America, Asia-Pacific, Latin America, EMEA.
Relevant company sizes	All	**Licensing options**	Perpetual: $4,500 per seat. $11,250 for one concurrent license Subscription option also available. Pricing depends on number of users.
URL	https://www.rocketsoftware.com	**Routes to market**	Direct sales, managed service providers, ISVs, resellers, VARs
Company headquarters	Waltham, MA, US	**Number of employees**	1,500

Source: Ovum

Appendix

On the Radar

On the Radar is a series of research notes about vendors bringing innovative ideas, products, or business models to their markets. Although On the Radar vendors may not be ready for prime time, they bear watching for their potential impact on markets and could be suitable for certain enterprise and public sector IT organizations.

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