Kinvolk Announces Commercial Support and Update Service for Flatcar Container Linux

Container adopters including UpGuard welcome new offering as the natural successor to CoreOS Container Linux.

BERLIN (PRWEB) November 07, 2019 -- Kinvolk, the Kubernetes Linux experts, today announced the general availability of the Kinvolk Flatcar Container Linux Subscription, delivering the industry’s first and only commercially-supported, seamless in-place upgrade path for CoreOS Container Linux users. Included in the subscription is a new managed update service that enables fine-grain control and visibility of Flatcar Container Linux deployments at any scale.

The concept of a container Linux operating system, pioneered by CoreOS, has gained massive adoption across the industry and is the basis of many deployments of Kubernetes, as well as other orchestrators and non-orchestrated containers. The key characteristics of a container Linux system are:
- Support for the minimum set of components required for deploying container-based applications, resulting in less core platform software to manage, and a reduced attack surface
- An immutable file system, leading to significantly enhanced security and simplified maintenance at scale
- Automatic updates, ensuring all machines get the latest security patches.

Flatcar Container Linux was established in March 2018 [1] as a fork of CoreOS Container Linux, following Red Hat’s acquisition of CoreOS, Inc. At the time, Kinvolk saw this as an insurance policy for a future when Red Hat might terminate ongoing support and maintenance of the widely-deployed CoreOS platform.

Red Hat has since confirmed the imminent end-of-life of CoreOS Container Linux [2], and is merging some of those technologies with RHEL Atomic into RHEL CoreOS as part of its OpenShift platform. With Flatcar left as the natural successor to CoreOS Container Linux, Kinvolk’s new subscription offering is the only solution available for users who want ongoing security updates and enterprise-grade 24x7 technical support.

"As we realized CoreOS Container Linux was reaching end of support, we reached out to the team at Kinvolk and were impressed by their commitment to the original CoreOS vision, and their ability to support us through a seamless transition to Flatcar," said Michael Ferraro, VP Platform at UpGuard, a leading cybersecurity vendor. "With a Flatcar Container Linux subscription in place, we now feel comfortable that we have a viable long-term platform strategy."

The Kinvolk subscription also includes a managed service component. The Kinvolk Update Service is similar to CoreOS' proprietary CoreUpdate, but built with 100% open source software. This new service, which can also be deployed on-premise behind a customer’s own firewall, gives administrators easy control over large fleets of Flatcar Container Linux including rate limiting of updates and separate deployment groups — for example, to allow a small portion of the fleet to run in beta while most machines are on stable. Its modern visual interface provides at-a-glance view of the fleet status, as well as enabling drilling down into detailed status and history including audit logs of all update-related events.

As part of the Kinvolk Flatcar Container Linux Subscription, customers have access to new software releases across four delivery channels: stable, beta, alpha and edge (experimental). Significant planned enhancements include updates to more recent versions of the Linux kernel and key components like systemd, user-space Berkeley Packet Filter (BPF) tools, and enhanced troubleshooting capabilities.
“Since our founding four years ago, Kinvolk has steadily earned its reputation as Kubernetes Linux experts, from our early collaboration with CoreOS developing the ground-breaking rkt container engine to more recent contributions in areas such as Berkeley packet filter (BPF), network security and service mesh,” said Chris Kühl, chief executive officer at Kinvolk. “We are building on that experience to bring to the community a viable, commercially supported container optimized operating system and update service.”

The Kinvolk Flatcar Container Linux Subscription is available today, and is already being adopted by multiple large enterprise customers across thousands of container hosts. Pricing is per node (physical or virtual, without CPU limits). From now until March 31, 2020, Kinvolk will commit to matching the price of any existing CoreOS Container Linux support contract, and will beat it by at least 10% for the first year’s subscription.

To find out more about Flatcar Container Linux, including a demo of a live upgrade from CoreOS Container Linux to Flatcar, attend an introductory webinar at one of the following times:
- Europe: Tuesday, November 12th, 13:00 GMT / 14:00 Central European Time. Registration link: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_n2bT6VlkS8-x9E7O8nyFgA
- North America: Tuesday, November 12th, 11am Pacific / 2pm Eastern. Registration link: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_T9feI1PTCKnR11Ugt81A

Kinvolk will be exhibiting at KubeCon + CloudNativeCon North America 2019 in San Diego, November 19-21, booth #SE20.

About Kinvolk
Kinvolk are the Kubernetes Linux experts. Founded in Berlin, Germany in 2015 by a trio of open source technologists, the company established its reputation through ground-breaking projects such as the rkt container engine (developed in collaboration with CoreOS), systemd, and Weave Scope (BPF-based container monitoring). Kinvolk maintains and provides support for a number of open source projects including Flatcar Container Linux (a fork of CoreOS Container Linux) and Lokomotive (a Kubernetes distribution inspired by CoreOS Tectonic). As believers in open community collaboration, Kinvolk sponsors and co-organizes the All Systems Go! and Cloud-Native RejekBTS conferences. Customers include major technology vendors, innovative start-ups, and end-users deploying Linux and Kubernetes.

Supporting Quotes
“We believe Flatcar Container Linux will be welcomed by developers and administrators who rely on CoreOS today for its lightweight approach, built-in support of the Docker container engine, and as a proven platform for Docker Enterprise.” – Justin Graham, VP Product Management at Docker, Inc.

“We’re longtime fans of CoreOS Container Linux, and it remains the most popular substrate for container environments in our bare metal cloud. With Flatcar Container Linux, the community now has a strong roadmap upon which to continue the momentum of CoreOS, backed by a proactive support model and the stellar Kinvolk team. We are inviting our CoreOS users to migrate to Flatcar Container Linux, which has been fully integrated into the Packet platform.” – Zac Smith, CEO at Packet, a leading bare metal cloud provider based in New York.

“At Container Solutions, we’re in the business of helping customers shift their businesses to modern software development and deployment practices. CoreOS Container Linux has been one of our customers' most popular options, so we are pleased to see Kinvolk taking the initiative to enable them to continue with the same software foundation on a commercially supported basis.” – Jamie Dobson, CEO at Container Solutions
"CoreOS Container Linux has seen wide adoption across the industry, and many users are looking for a path forward that doesn't entail significant operational disruption. Over the past 18 months, Kinvolk has demonstrated their commitment and ability to do this with Flatcar Container Linux, and I'm pleased to see they are now backing that up with commercial support and managed update service." – Joe Sandoval, SRE Manager, Infrastructure Platform at Adobe, and OpenStack User Committee member

“We are excited to be collaborating with Kinvolk to enable an upgrade path for our customers who are currently deploying Kubernetes with CoreOS, as well as supporting future Kubernetes adopters who need a secure operating system foundation.” – Matt Barker, CEO at Jetstack, a leading Kubernetes consultancy based in London, UK

“At Giant Swarm, we strongly believe in the minimal and immutable container Linux approach, which is why we built our managed Kubernetes service on CoreOS (in part with the help of Kinvolk's engineering team). Going forward, Flatcar Container Linux offers us an identical operational experience, with the commitment to long-term maintenance, support and security updates that we need to ensure a stable platform for our demanding enterprise customers such as Adidas and Vodafone.” – Timo Derstappen, chief technology officer, Giant Swarm

“The market is looking for a container Linux distribution maintained by an independent, community-oriented team, and Kinvolk has the right pedigree to deliver it. We are excited to collaborate with them to help our Kubermatic Kubernetes Platform customers adopt Flatcar Container Linux.” – Sebastian Scheele, co-founder and CEO, Loodse
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