

THE DREAM OF A SEAMLESS CLOUD



In a work environment where employees demand mobile solutions, and the C-suite is mandated to keep data secure and business processes grounded, CIOs are hard-pressed to create seamless cloud to on-premise solutions that are both user and business friendly.



ombining cloud services with existing on-premise technologies can seem like a pipe dream. Currently, the idea that enterprises will be able to

use cloud applications and storage as a primary source may seem impossible, or even unnecessary. However, pairing cloud applications and traditional applications is a practice that is currently underway – though not without a few bumps in the road.

Reaching out to the cloud is in high-demand these days. Employees want the agility and accessibility of cloud services to support their increasingly mobile business activities. Still, businesses are reliant on legacy systems and other applications that simply cannot, or should not be hosted in the cloud. Employees and other end-users want the best of both worlds. But combining a system of on-premise services with those hosted in the cloud can be a bit tricky. Determining which applications and services belong where to create an optimised user experience while protecting data and processes is key.

Meeting the demands and requirements of creating a seamless cloud to on-premise experience can be a challenge for CIOs, most experts would agree. “Enterprise IT is faced with the challenge of providing a seamless experience across on-premise infrastructure and the public cloud,” says Suda Srinivasa, Director, Product Marketing, Nutanix. “Many applications built for traditional environments use a monolithic architecture,” he explains further, “Successful migration to the cloud requires re-architecting these application to fit the scale-out, fractional consumption model that cloud offers.”

Still, enterprises throughout the world and in the region are beginning to create what aim to be seamless cloud to on-premise environments to meet the needs of their users. The key to creating such a user experience, says Sudheer Subramanian, IT Solutions



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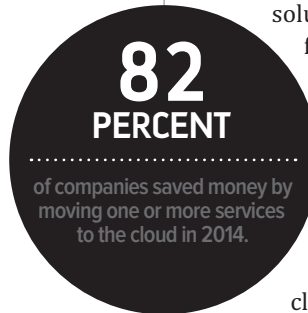
Sudheer Subramanian, IT Solutions Director, Huawei Enterprise Middle East

Director, Huawei Enterprise Middle East, is planning and vision. “It is important for CIOs to understand the critical application characteristics and dependencies before designing the cloud model. Proof of concept is essential to test the application’s performance and scalability as it is critical in cloudification,” he says.

The first step, it would seem, is to determine which applications, services and solutions are appropriate to move from on-premises infrastructure to a cloud environment. Applications that are ‘cloud-worthy’ are those that need to be scalable, agile and accessible in a mobile work environment.

“In our experience, the applications that move to the cloud first are the ones that are variable in nature, where the load varies over time, enabling you to take advantage of the hourly billing and dynamic scaling of cloud, to only pay for what you require at the time. Also Internet facing web-based applications, test and development systems and disaster recovery use cases are ideal for cloud,” says Grant Morgan, General Manager, Cloud, Dimension Data Middle East and Africa.

There are other challenges that may come up when attempting to create a seamless cloud environment. “CIOs and IT managers may find themselves trying to standardise



Cloud

multiple user interfaces, custom codes and programming languages when implementing such integration tools, explains Rajesh Abraham, Director, Product Development, eHosting DataFort. "It is important for the enterprise to contact its managed services provider to achieve the promised benefits of cloud, its lower costs and accessibility of data," he says.

There are certain applications that should remain on-premise as well. Applications and data that perform processes that are confidential, for example, should remain on-premise to maintain optimum security. "Applications involving private data of a sensitive nature should generally be grounded," confirms Cherif Sleiman, General Manager, Middle East, Infoblox.

With all of this effort toward creating a seamless cloud to on-premise experience, it is undeniable that we are moving toward a more mobile, 'smarter' world. "As we are moving forward in advanced technologies where everything is becoming smart, we may be able to expect a future in which all computing will be done in the cloud," says Jamil Ezzo, Director General, ICDL Arabia. "However, the shift toward cloud computing will be faced with challenges that will take time to be resolved, particularly in the creation of an environment that can easily deal with this new way of computing."

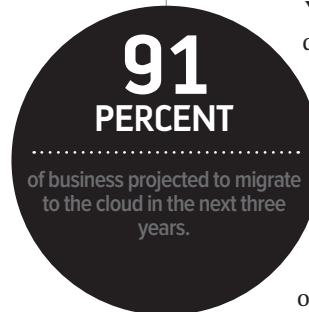
Kumaravel Ramakrishnan, Product Manager, ManageEngine agrees that the future is in the



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clouds, however, points out that traffic and data will be an issue. "With a growth of over 300 percent in the past six years and with 91 percent of businesses projected to migrate to the cloud in the next three years, the future of all computing points toward the cloud," he says, "However, with global data centre traffic projected to grow three-fold in 2012-2017, we will have too much data to handle."



Yet, the move to the cloud is driven by benefits that CIOs simply cannot pass on. The answer is then a seamless hybrid cloud environment. "Going hybrid offers opportunities to better balance CAPEX investments in owned resources and OPEX spending on cloud-based services, and to leverage the combined capabilities

of private and public clouds," says Taj El-khayat, Regional Vice President, Middle East, Turkey, North, West, and Central Africa, Riverbed Technology. Louay Dahmash, Head of Middle East, Autodesk, agrees, "From a business perspective, the cloud can also offer many opportunities and possibilities like collaboration, increased mobility, infinite computing power and affordability," he says.

With the benefits of providing employees with accessible applications and services so great, it is imperative that CIOs turn their attention to creating a seamless cloud environment that is both streamlined for end-users, and that protects sensitive data and processes. With careful planning, this type of integration is possible, and we will likely be seeing a good deal more of it in the future. ■



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