Cloudhosting

Cloud Expo Europe 2015:

Including 12 pages of 'ones to watch' at the show

The equaliser:

Can cloud level the playing field for UK businesses?

Colocation:

Understanding the advantage

Decision time:

Big data is changing the data centre landscape

Legal discovery:

The long arm of the law

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Managing IT suppliers

INDUSTRY NEWS - USER STORIES - OPINIONS - INTERVIEWS - ANALYSIS

Contents

Cloud backup? It´s child´s play..10
Play equipment manufacturer Playdale has improved the way it works with a low bandwidth Backup-as-a-Service approach

It´s an IT jungle out there...22
Rainforest charity to benefit from iomart campaign being promoted at Cloud Expo 15

Big data, big decisions...29
Omer Wilson, director at Digital Realty, discusses what data centre providers must offer their clients in this age of big data if they are to be successful in future

Make mine a double...34
Iconic wine merchant Oddbins is using Rackspace Managed Cloud services to power its website as it aims to double online sales by improving the shopping experience of its e-Commerce customers

From the Editor

The publication of this issue of Cloud Hosting is due to coincide with the industry's biggest event of the year, Cloud Expo at London's ExCel venue. The CH team will be there in person, of course, and in the form of hundreds of extra copies of the magazine itself, available on the stands of many of the exhibitors featured in our special preview pages. As well as an overview of the show itself, we also feature a plethora of news, opinions and bylined articles from some of the biggest names in the sector - and a few that may be new to you. Make sure you check out our special feature, and of course be sure to visit these companies while you're at the show - and if you see us wandering around, do say hello: it's always great to speak to our readers!

A recurring theme for many of the firms at the show - and therefore by extension a concern for users and buyers - is the increasing complexity of the market, and the difficulties of trying to establish and maintain a coherent IT strategy in a sector where the goalposts seem to move almost weekly. As Claranet's Neil Thomas comments in his piece in this issue: "As the cloud industry matures, it's becoming clear that there is a vast amount of choice, and that there is no one cloud solution for all requirements, creating the more complicated world of Hybrid IT. While choice is a good thing, it also risks becoming a headache as applications and data are spread over multiple systems, creating an overhead that many IT managers don't have the resource to deal with or manage."

Mid-tier organisations are faced with increasingly complex IT estates, and must balance legacy considerations, different software solutions, and multiple suppliers, which demands new skill-sets. Many will have spent a long time trying to consolidate their systems, but as the choices continually increase, the optimum approach these days might well involve using multiple different infrastructure providers - shifting the IT department's focus away from the technology to supplier management.

It seems somewhat counter-intuitive to be talking about a shift away from a technology focus to a supply chain management one, at this level of a business' operations - but increasingly this seems to be the way the entire IT industry is moving. Is this the logical extension of the 'everything-as-a-service' trend? And if so what does it mean for internal IT management?

David Tyler
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CLOUD SECURITY FEARS

New research from the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) has found that despite three fifths (60%) of small firms questioned using cloud computing services, the remaining two fifths (38%) remain sceptical about the benefits of the technology in the face of perceived risks.

When asked what risks they most associated with cloud computing, the FSB members questioned listed the following top five concerns: data theft or loss (61%), reliable access to online services (55%), concerns over who would have access to the data (53%), liability issues (41%) and over dependence on cloud computing services (33%).

Commenting on the findings John Allan, FSB National Chairman, said: "Many small businesses are recognising the advantages of cloud computing services, but there remains a great deal of concern that sensitive data may not be secure or the service not reliable. Businesses don't want to transition to cloud based systems without knowing who will be liable if something goes wrong. As our previous research has shown, there are significant gains to be made from using this technology so it is imperative more is done to address firm's understandable reservations and remove barriers to take-up."

Out of all the businesses questioned, just under half (45%) said they were already greatly or fairly reliant on cloud computing services. The most common services currently used by the small businesses who use cloud computing included: storing files online (74%), web based email and calendars (67%), file sharing services (64%), web based office software (38%) and accounting and invoicing services (37%).

When asked what changes would help persuade small firms to use cloud computing services, half of all respondents wanted plain English terms and conditions (48%) and nearly as many wanted simpler and more transparent pricing (46%).

www.fsb.org.uk

TWO NEW CLOUD APPS FROM KYOCERA

KYOCERA has launched two new HyPAS apps, KYOCERA Cloud Print and Cloud Direct. Cloud Print provides a direct connection to Google Cloud Print, Google Docs and Google Apps, and enables integration with user authentication solutions such as PaperCut, Equitrac and SafeCom. The app makes it easy to print files from smartphones, tablets or PCs.

KYOCERA Cloud Direct provides a straight connection to Google Drive and Dropbox, as well as access to internet faxing from KYOCERA HyPAS enabled devices. To accommodate a wide range of organisations there are two versions of Cloud Direct - one for Google Drive and one for Dropbox. Both of the new apps give organisations the ability to introduce user authentication and provide single sign-on to the device.

Sarah White, Product Marketing Manager said: "With many organisations selecting Cloud storage as their primary storage method, employers are looking for the easiest way for their employees to access the Cloud and their stored documents. We're offering a 30 day free trial so that SMEs can see what a difference this app can make to their organisation." Visit the website below for details.

www.hypas.co.uk

CLARANET BOOSTS STORAGE WITH HP SSD ARRAYS

Claranet has completed a major investment in its storage capabilities, furnishing its storage services with Solid State arrays from HP. The company has invested over £1 million into a new shared storage platform across three of its data centres, introducing a three-tiered model of storage. Each tier will have a guaranteed Quality of Service in terms of Input/Output Operations Per Second (IOPS). Both the standard and the premium tiers will be delivered from 100 per cent Solid State Drives from HP 3PAR arrays, providing a cutting edge platform available on a pay-as-you-grow per GB/Month model.

Neil Thomas, Claranet's Product Director, said: "This latest investment in our data centres will put our storage capabilities at the forefront of the industry, and grant our customers greater flexibility as to how they store and access their data, helping them to achieve low levels of latency for real-time applications. Claranet manages petabytes of customer data in its data centres, with a lot of this managed on shared storage platforms. These shared platforms give customers the ability to pay-as-you-go and buy storage as they need it, on an OpEx basis, as a fully managed service."

www.claranet.co.uk

IOMART ACCREDITED FOR UK GOVERNMENT G-CLOUD 6

iomart has been awarded a place on G-Cloud 6, the UK Government's Digital Marketplace. iomart has been accredited to supply Infrastructure as a Service; Platform as a Service; Software as a Service; and Specialist Cloud Services. Among the services it offers are: vCloud and vCloud IaaS - self-managed and hosted virtual infrastructure services based on a VMware vCloud environment; Desktop as a Service; Hosted Exchange and Storage; Business Mail plus Mail and Web Filtering; File Sync and Share; and Advanced DDoS Protection using Arbor Network's Peakflow solution.

iomart's backup specialist Backup Technology (BTL) has also been accredited, having been on G Cloud since it was first created by the UK Government to make buying cloud services easier for the public sector and to open up competition for contracts to SMEs.

In total iomart and BTL now protect more than 100TBs of data for public sector organisations including the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board, two councils in Northern Ireland, and Essex County Fire & Rescue Service (ECFRS), one of the largest county fire services in the UK.

Jan Swanwick, Head of ICT for Essex County Fire & Rescue Service, explains, "Traditionally procurement has been a long, protracted process. With G-Cloud it is very straightforward because all the supplier and product information has already been collated and validated."

www.iomart.com

NEW NETAPP SOLUTIONS SECURE A SAFE PATH FOR DATA

NetApp has introduced new software and solutions for hybrid IT deployments that improve data backup and recovery times and give customers more control over their data throughout its lifecycle. NetApp can leverage the flexibility of Amazon Web Services (AWS) to address backup, recovery and archive challenges. The company has also introduced three new models of SteelStore cloud-native backup solution as an Amazon Machine Image (AMI), which provides an efficient and secure approach to back up cloud-based workloads.

Customers can also choose on-premises SteelStore physical appliances for seamless, secure data protection to the cloud.

Additionally, NetApp is adding support for Amazon Simple Storage Service (Amazon S3) as a storage tier to StorageGRID Webscale, a scalable, highly durable object storage solution for long-term archives. The company also released updates to its OnCommand Cloud Manager, OnCommand Insight software and Cloud ONTAP software subscription.

www.netapp.com

HYBRID BY DESIGN

Easynet has enlisted the help of hybrid cloud software provider Abiquo to form the foundation of its global cloud strategy: 'hybrid by design'. The global managed services provider has selected Abiquo's cloud management platform in order to create a unified cloud platform and deliver a comprehensive hybrid cloud solution to its customers. With fully integrated cloud solutions across private, private-shared and public cloud environments, Easynet needed a cloud management platform that could simplify control and management of all virtual environments. Easynet chose Abiquo due to its level of support for multiple hypervisors, extensive range of support for public cloud providers, its simple and clear user interface, and extensive integration options.

The deployment spans seven nodes across five key regions; UK, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain. APAC and the Americas will be added in the first half of 2015. By providing a unified cloud management platform across multiple regions, Easynet has been able to further standardise its cloud portfolio and deliver non-bespoke, repeatable, high quality solutions to its customers.

www.abiquo.com

DEDICATED TO VMWARE

Rackspace has announced the availability of Dedicated VMware vCloud, a single-tenant, hosted environment that offers advanced automation, self-service, hosted catalogues and access to the vCloud API and vCloud web portal. The environment is backed by Rackspace's 100% network uptime guarantee and one-hour hardware replacement guarantee.

By exposing the vCloud API directly to each customer, Rackspace allows the customer to integrate a third-party orchestration tool and introduce policy-based governance. Hosted catalogues and self-service are available via the vCloud stack.

www.rackspace.com

How to navigate an increasingly complex IT landscape

IT leaders are facing new levels of complexity as they seek to address business needs, says Neil Thomas, Product Director at Claranet

The cloud industry has perpetuated a notion that cloud is simple and cheap, when, in fact, the opposite is often true. While the cloud has enabled all sorts of flexibility and agility, the explosion of available choice has actually driven complexity for most IT teams. As this accelerates, IT leaders will need greater support from their providers to navigate the increasingly complex IT landscape.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

The principles behind cloud computing services make IT a simpler, and sometimes cheaper, proposition for organisations to adopt than traditional forms of procuring and using technology. However, while cloud has helped to drive simplicity for end users, it has also increased the capacity for businesses to be more demanding of their IT departments, while expanding the number of potential suppliers and systems that an IT department has to manage and secure. It is widely accepted that there will not be a single cloud computing platform for all requirements, and that therefore Hybrid cloud solutions will be the way of the future. However, as the IT environment spans over a greater number of different ecosystems, the management overhead grows.

Cloud computing has been marketed as a simpler, easier and cheaper alternative to on-premises IT, but in many respects, the situation is now considerably more complex. Behind the veneer of cloud's simplicity sits an increasingly complex and difficult-to-manage ecosystem, creating new challenges for the IT department.

As the cloud industry matures, it's becoming clear that there is a vast amount of choice, and that there is no one cloud solution for all requirements, creating the more complicated world of Hybrid IT. While choice is a good thing it also risks becoming a headache, as applications and data are spread over multiple systems, creating an overhead that many IT managers don't have the resource to deal with or manage. Although start-ups might just find it easier to put everything into public cloud, the picture for most businesses is more complex.

Mid-tier organisations are faced with increasingly complex IT estates, and must balance legacy considerations, different software solutions, and multiple suppliers, which demands new skill-sets. Many will have spent a long time trying to consolidate their systems, but it's starting to explode out in terms of choice, and the optimum solution today might involve using multiple different infrastructure providers - shifting the IT department's focus away from the technology to supplier management.

A supplier who can work over different infrastructures will therefore be essential going forward, simplifying the management process and freeing up the IT department to focus on core business activities. The successful IT departments will use their supply chain correctly and partner with trusted suppliers that can offer the support they need. This in turn can help them to deliver the business agility that the industry said that cloud would deliver.
More info: www.claranet.co.uk

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Cloud backup? It´s child´s play

Play equipment manufacturer Playdale has improved the way it works with a low bandwidth Backup-as-a-Service approach

Playdale Playgrounds manufactures, supplies and installs outdoor play equipment across the UK, as well as exporting to over 14 countries globally. Playdale's owners, the Croasdale family, started out in the logging industry in 1735. In 1978, the ninth generation of Croasdales refocused their trade to the design, manufacture and installation of playground equipment for schools, local authorities, leisure operators and more. Since then, they have grown to approximately 140 staff, 90 of whom are IT users, split between 20 mobile workers and 70 desk-based roles in their central office in Cumbria.

PICTURE THIS

Playdale employs a remote sales team, dispersed around the country for maximum customer reach. However, their head office is based at a remote location in the Lake District, so much of their correspondence with the team (and customers) takes place over email. As such, the availability of fast and reliable Internet connectivity has been one of the company's most significant IT challenges over the years.

This is compounded by the fact that Playdale wins the majority of new business on the strength of its customer presentations. Historically, presentation materials (such as product designs and site plans) were hand-drawn by illustrators, negating any significant investment in technology. However, as the industry moved towards computer-aided design (CAD), IT manager Phil Rhoney knew the company had to start leveraging more technology in its design processes: "When I joined Playdale I inherited an aging desktop estate of about forty 386 and 486 desktops running Windows 98. This suited the illustrators fine at the time, but I knew 3D design and video was going to become essential to win new business, and I needed to enable that with our technology strategy. Today, the presentations contain rich 2D and 3D

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playground designs, and photo realistic walkthrough videos with high-end shadow and lighting effects. In short, that means they're larger files. Moreover, our designs are unique to every individual project - we very rarely recycle assets, so we experience a lot of data churn. Managing the data lifecycle - from creation to archiving - is essential."

In parallel with the challenge of richer (and therefore larger) media assets, Playdale has had to contend with the limited availability of high-speed Internet at the company's rural head office, as Rhoney explains: "Before we got broadband in 2004 we were using a 256k ISDN dial-up connection. Even when we got our first leased line, our upload speed was throttled to 256k, so our overnight backups were taking hours. We needed a backup solution that would protect our exchange data as economically as possible - both in terms of network traffic and backup windows."

WHY BACKUP-AS-A-SERVICE?
Playdale's legacy backup solution was an onsite appliance that struggled to properly backup Exchange data, regularly either backing up the data store in one big block or gathering Outlook's local .PST files into one place and writing them to tape.
After securing a fast and reliable (if costly) Internet connection, Phil required an alternative backup solution that didn't depend on high levels of connectivity to provide an effective service. That's when Databarracks got in touch.

"Databarracks Backup as a service is the only cloud service we have adopted so far," continues Phil Rhoney. "We're now on a 20MB leased line, which gives us the performance we need, but it's quite pricy because of our location. As such, we have to prioritise the bandwidth available to us. This means we have a dual approach to backups, using online backup for our most critical data and a weekly tape backup for our high-volume data. The data lifecycle is quite fast at Playdale, so incremental backups are the ideal solution for us, particularly given our connectivity. We've secured a steady upload speed which means that backing up 30-40GB overnight is now a question of minutes, instead of hours. Compared to our weekly tape backup, which takes about 7-8 hours for 1.6TB, it's incredibly efficient."

REACHING FURTHER
A more reliable and cost-effective backup solution has enabled Playdale to distribute their presentation content to a broader range of customers - both via their mobile sales team and through email. In fact, Playdale's reach has increased so significantly they are now looking to export domestically manufactured playground equipment to international clients.

"I haven't had to think about our Exchange backups since we started using Databarracks, so I've been able to devote my attention to other projects," says Rhoney. "The solution is very reliable, but what I'm really paying for is the time to

focus on activities that develop the business. The support team take care of pretty much everything - I'll often receive an automated email, followed up by a phone call, informing me that a backup fault has been resolved before I'm even aware of it at our end."

Peripherally, Backup-as-a-Service (BaaS) has enabled Playdale to modernise processes that were a hangover from older systems, as Rhoney enthused: "We used to send out presentation content on A1 and A2 printed paper, which was very costly. Having a backup solution that consumes bandwidth economically leaves us room to email large quantities of media more freely between our head office, remote workers and customer sites, thereby saving on considerable postage costs."

Perhaps most crucially, Backup-as-a-Service from Databarracks has enabled Playdale to overcome the connectivity limitations faced by its remote sales team without compromising the level of service they receive.

"The continuous improvement of our presentation materials is what's going to differentiate us when pitching to customers," concludes Rhoney. "We have to sell the experience of the playground to both the adult decision makers and, sometimes, the children who will use it. Backup as a service makes it easier and cheaper to store, manage and protect the assets which drive our business forward."
More info: www.databarracks.com

Better, by design

Jeremy Powell, Director of Product Marketing at Nemetschek Vectorworks, Inc., updates Cloud Hosting on the benefits of cloud services and mobile apps for users of the company's innovative CAD and BIM technologies

About this time a year ago, I wrote an article for Cloud Hosting magazine that discussed the chaotic state of some design offices and the common, driving need to find ways to increase efficiency. Over the past year, this need has continued to plague designers, and we hear about it time and time again from our users. It would seem the only thing that has substantially changed in the past 12 months is the abundant number of cloud and mobile offerings that are available.

There are apps meant to aid design creativity or help boost efficiency by measuring existing conditions, and much more. However, while there are mixed reviews and mixed results from these types of apps, many people who passionately care about this industry believe that the day will surely come when such apps are very accurate and tie well into downstream design processes like CAD and BIM authoring tools.

While this sense of optimism is very exciting, this does not mean today's app-scene is bleak. In fact, some current mobile apps and cloud-based services really excel at streamlining design-based workflows by freeing up desktop computing time, as well as connecting with your go-to design software to improve your productivity and simplify your ability to present ideas.

PRODUCTIVITY BOOST

Nemetschek Vectorworks, which develops a line of CAD and BIM solutions for the AEC, landscape, and entertainment industries under the Vectorworks brand, launched Vectorworks Cloud Services 3.0 this past September to deliver productivity gains by connecting to users' preferred design software. This release included updating the cloud servers to run Vectorworks 2015, which is now fully 64 bit, as well as updating the signature mobile app, Vectorworks Nomad 3.0.

In addition, we launched a brand new mobile app for all Vectorworks users

called Vectorworks Remote as the latest addition to Nemetschek Vectorworks' mobile app offerings. Our primary goal with this launch was to provide greater presentation capability for our users and to find new and meaningful ways for the everyday designer using Vectorworks software to be more productive.

To boost that productivity, we first updated the servers to run Vectorworks 2015. Because the latest version is fully 64 bit, this evolution had a major impact on the processing capabilities of Vectorworks Cloud Services. Now, users with even the most complicated geometric files or files with very high resolutions for rendering can compute substantially faster and more reliably. This is something that all users instantly notice.

MODELLING GOES MOBILE
Our signature mobile app, Vectorworks Nomad, now supports 3D viewing of designers' Vectorworks files. This is a major addition that turns Nomad into more than just a viewer for Construction Drawings. It now has a fluid and interactive way to view, fly over, walk through, and zoom in and out of your textured and shaded 3D models. As you can imagine, this is a great convenience for designers who want to show their clients various views of the models they are proposing.

The Vectorworks Remote App connects your mobile device to your Vectorworks desktop using a remote connection plug-in. When using the app, you can interactively use the device like a remote to view, navigate, and present your designs without having to be at your desktop. This is great for group reviews and presentations. In addition, you can use it as a productivity tool even while sitting in front of your desktop as the Remote can be used to control the visibilities and views of the file on which you are working. It also helps to save

valuable screen real estate when used in this way.

As one of our users, scenic and lighting designer Kevin Lee Allen, says: "I cannot live without the new Vectorworks Remote App that connects mobile devices to Vectorworks software. The app lets you view, navigate, and present your designs without having to be at your desktop. It is also terrific for navigating while designing."

"Our signature mobile app, Vectorworks Nomad, now supports 3D viewing of designers' Vectorworks files. This is a major addition that turns Nomad into more than just a viewer for Construction Drawings. It now has a fluid and interactive way to view, fly over, walk through, and zoom in and out of your textured and shaded 3D models. As you can imagine, this is a great convenience for designers who want to show their clients various views of the models they are proposing."

These are just a couple of examples of recent additions to our apps that are easy to use and tie directly into the workflows of today's savvy designers. There are many more possibilities for using cloud and mobile technologies in an integrated manner with your preferred software solution. This is just the beginning on our part, and we're excited to continue to explore the possibilities that mobile technology can bring to your workflow and what you, in turn, can do with it to transform the world with your creative visions.
More info: www.vectorworks.net

The long arm of the law

Nick Rich, Lead Solutions Advisor at Epiq Systems, examines the ongoing legal issues around what has become known as the 'Microsoft Dublin warrant case'

In December 2013 a Magistrate Judge in the State District of New York signed a search warrant for the seizure of emails and other records in a particular MSN email account - which was stored on servers located in a data centre in Dublin, Ireland. The data centre was owned and operated by a local Microsoft subsidiary, which Microsoft's general counsel argued put it out of reach of a U.S. search warrant.

On July 31st 2014, Chief U.S. District Judge Loretta Preska ruled against Microsoft's appeal, finding that the location of the email data was not relevant as Microsoft "controlled it" from the U.S. In her view, emails stored by Microsoft customers or users on Microsoft servers constitute Microsoft business records. Microsoft has said it will not comply with the order and will continue its appeal to the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. The case is therefore ongoing as this magazine went to press.

IS YOUR DATA ON THE MICROSOFT CLOUD?

What are the implications for companies storing their data on the Microsoft Cloud? If this ruling stands up to the appeals procedure, the U.S. government will have successfully asserted its right to obtain, by subpoena or warrant, information created and stored outside the United States, where such information is stored on servers belonging to U.S. corporations. It follows that European corporations, whose data is stored on Microsoft's cloud within European data centres, could see that data become subject to investigation by U.S. authorities without recourse to existing agreements between the U.S. government and European sovereign governments.

This potential breach of data privacy/protection in the EU has huge implications:

- European companies with data on servers operated or owned by Microsoft could be compelled to instigate potentially costly data migrations
- Data left on such Microsoft servers based in Europe could be transferred to the U.S. and used in U.S.-based investigations , which could impose substantial legal costs on corporations as they are required to respond - and they could also incur fines for breach of EU laws
- Fines arising from such investigations could cause significant financial and reputational damage to corporations.

WHAT ABOUT OTHER CLOUD PROVIDERS?

Of course the implications of this case extend beyond Microsoft to other cloud providers. If your company holds data on servers operated or owned by U.S. based entities there are pressing issues to consider: understand your data and know where and how it is stored. Your data should arguably already be incorporated into a litigation/investigation readiness programme. To the extent that it isn't, consider the following questions:

- Is there a full report (data map) of what data is stored in Europe on servers belonging to US-based cloud providers?
- Is there a process defined and implemented to keep the data map up to date?
- Do the contracts in place with U.S.-based cloud providers stipulate that the data must not move to the U.S. in the ordinary course of events? Have you been advised that this is enough to avoid U.S. judicial enforcement?
- Is this data subject to the retention and disposition policies that have been agreed to within your organisation? Is there a process in place for deleting redundant data?
- Is there a plan in place for migrating the data rapidly should this become necessary?

If, at a minimum, these questions cannot all be answered affirmatively, a corporation could be at risk of seeing its data seized by U.S. authorities in the context of an investigation.

While Microsoft's appeals process may take months, its conclusion may have far-reaching consequences for European entities with data stored by U.S. cloud providers. Regardless of the case outcome, savvy legal practitioners should consider creating an action plan to meet these requirements, as the benefits of such a plan far outweigh the risks of not having one.

More info: www.epiqsystems.co.uk

THE CLOUD. WHAT'S NEW. WHAT'S NEXT.

Just as you thought you had ticked all your organisation's cloud boxes... Cloud Expo Europe is jam packed with world-class expertise to help you choose and implement the right business and technology solutions for your organisation, wherever it is in it's cloud journey.

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Where is Enterprise IT going? To Cloud Expo Europe, of course!

The organisers describe Cloud Expo Europe as 'two days of intensive net-working and knowledge gathering' - Cloud Hosting magazine will be there of course, and we summarise below some of the expected highlights

CLOUD ◆
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11 – 12 March 2015 ExCeL London
www.cloudexpoeurope.com

As Cloud Expo Europe rolls around once again, the potential attendee finds his eyes drawn not by the (admittedly enormous) exhibition, but to the even more enormous speaker programme - there is almost certainly no single event anywhere globally that offers the chance to get so much information from top quality industry specialists, as there is at Cloud Expo. The main conference programme alone includes over 300 speakers across two days, so the problem is not in finding presentations that will be of value, it is in whittling down the very long list into a few that an attendee can actually manage to get through in the time available!

BELIEVE THE HYPE?

George Reese of Dell is one of the key speakers at the event on the 11th, with a presentation covering a wealth of topics in one session: future cloud trends including 'containerised applications', building a mature cloud strategy to include both public and private components, governance in the cloud, and the importance of API security to the Internet of Things. Reese comments: "Cloud itself has been a tremendously hyped term and so many interests have attempted to co-opt the term to support their agenda. Businesses have gone to the cloud to achieve the agility that "on-demand, self-service" makes possible. Unfortunately, IT and operations have historically been focused on things like cost while businesses want to achieve agility. The cost benefits of cloud have been overhyped as well. Whether cloud is cheaper or more cost effective than other modes of consuming technology depends on so many context-specific variables. But the

"Whether cloud is cheaper or more cost effective than other modes of consuming technology depends on so many context-specific variables. But the cloud is undoubtedly a more agile delivery mechanism and has provided real benefits to the business."

cloud is undoubtedly a more agile delivery mechanism and has provided real benefits to the business."

Elsewhere, Bernard Golden of ActiveState will be speaking on the 12th about the incredible pressures that enterprise IT is under to get things done faster. Although he points out that it is crucial for IT organisations to adopt new technologies, he warns that companies should not be rushed or tempted to 'build the new legacy' by creating their own toolsets and infrastructures. "Don't build a one-off system if you're going to be the only ones using it. The challenge then is that you have a long-term need to maintain and improve an infrastructure toolset rather than focus on business value applications - that's not where enterprise IT should be."

Looking forward into the coming year, Golden feels the big task for 2015 will be encouraging organisations to recognise that they need to "rely on broader ecosystems and products which they can leverage," rather than deciding to run and build their own infrastructures.

THINGS AIN'T WHAT THEY USED TO BE

In 1982 the first 'internet enabled device' was created, a Coke machine that could report its own inventory. This begs the question that if the concept of connected devices has been around for so long why the massive fuss now about the Internet of Things?

By 2020 Gartner has predicted there will be 26 billion devices connected to the Internet of Things (IoT). You can control your heating from your iPhone, buy a fridge that automatically orders a delivery when running low on eggs, and even a car that contacts the garage to book itself in for a service. This has now far surpassed concept. It's now a consumer need and a business reality. All of this means more data and faster connectivity.

No one working in cloud computing will be unaware of the possibilities this presents, and the huge impact this will have on the business they work for. As such the organisers of Cloud Expo Europe have gathered some of the leading minds within the IoT community to present case studies and provide insight into how you can stay ahead of the curve. Speakers on the topic include Davide Cervellin of eBay talking about driving business intelligence, Andy Caddy of Virgin Active discussing wearables and fitness technology, and Dragan Pendic of Diageo on the crucial matter of 'the security of things'. This is a small selection of the speaker list just on this topic alone, see the website below for full details of the conference programme.

EBay's Cervellin will be talking on March 11th about the importance of placing data at the heart of business strategy and the crucial steps to take in achieving this goal: "Data has always been at the centre of the decision making process at eBay. In the retail space, being an online business has provided eBay with a significant advantage over companies who are struggling to deal with the bridge between online and offline touchpoints. Analytics has to be empowered in an organisation - eBay has fully achieved this by placing the function under finance, which has ensured involvement, credibility and neutrality."

ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM

The Cloud Industry Forum (CIF) is set to provide valuable educational resource for business at the show, as CIF Theatre speakers offer practical advice, guidance and education for end users looking to migrate to the Cloud.

The CIF theatre line-up has been devised as a comprehensive and independent education programme, covering a broad range of topics, including the role of the channel in the Cloud supply chain, the legal aspects of Cloud, choosing a Cloud supplier, and the role of Cloud certification. Leading industry representatives will debate key issues impacting the development of the industry and share best practice strategies for Cloud deployments including

Hybrid IT, Cloud licensing and 'dark data'.

New Cloud technologies are changing the way organisations do and run their business. A successful IT strategy must ensure Cloud-based resources, services and applications are living up to their promises. CIF's expert speakers will discuss the business benefits of Cloud and the IT strategies that can help to manage the change process. Among others, speakers from HP, Box and NaviSite will examine business challenges and opportunities around Cloud, while the Ingram Micro Cloud session will look at how Cloud is facilitating new ways of working.

Alex Hilton, CIF's CEO, said: "The speakers we have lined up in the CIF Theatre are industry experts who can communicate practical and real-world advice on the Cloud migration process for potential Cloud users. Our seminar programme will offer attendees a practical approach to Cloud services evaluation, from managing a Hybrid IT environment and contracting for Cloud services, ensuring that any queries or concerns over cloud migration are covered in the workshops."

In addition CIF will be announcing the winners of the UK Cloud Awards 2015, being held on the first night of the show.

MAKING A STAND
Of course while the conference programme goes on, the 'enormodome' halls of ExCel will also be housing the biggest exhibition floor space in the sector, with a record number of exhibitors (around 300 at the time of publication) showcasing the latest technology solutions and services on their stands - including SoftLayer, VMware, NetApp, iomart, Interoute, Equinix, Vodafone, Sungard, Digital Realty, NaviSite, Dimension Data, Cisco, Schneider Electric, Adapt, Equinix and NTT Communications, to name a few.

BACK TO THE CENTRE
Don't forget 'the cloud lives in the data centre': admission to Cloud Expo Europe also offers access to Data Centre World right next door, the largest and most influential gathering of data centre expertise, free of charge. Together the two events form the UK's biggest business technology exhibition and conference and the world's largest cloud and data centre events. They are the ultimate showcase of the latest cloud technologies for IT and technology professionals from across the UK and beyond.

No matter where visitors are on their cloud journey - whether they are looking to migrate into new markets or drive their business' digital transformation - Cloud Expo Europe aims to help them understand the technology and arms them with an informed awareness of how to bring the best value to their organisation. More info: www.cloudexpoeurope.com

CLOUD EXPO EUROPE: WHAT´S NEW FOR 2015

Internet of Things conference stream: IoT is the third wave of Internet Development. It is clear that IoT is not a fad, and for businesses using the IoT whilst harnessing the power of Big Data alongside, it will be revolutionary. Visitors can learn how these game changing fields of technology will shape the future of business, hearing from speakers including Virgin Active, eBay and the University of Cambridge.

The Future of Enterprise Hackathon challenge: IncuBus, a startup incubator on a bus, hosts a two-day hackathon at Cloud Expo Europe. Visitors can join in with the challenge and help develop the next disruptive cloud technologies.

Security in the cloud: With cloud security high on every business agenda, the Cloud Security Alliance will be co-hosting an enhanced security and compliance track aimed at helping both small and larger organisations better safeguard their business systems and data against cyber-attacks.

Open Cloud & Developer Park: An increasing number of organisations are relying on open source platforms and infrastructures to run their day-to-day business processes. This new feature of the show aims to help visitors learn how to get the most out of Open Source in order to boost efficiency and aid agility and interoperability in in the fast-moving world of tech.

Cloud Industry Forum: The Cloud Industry Forum (CIF) will be leading topical discussions on key issues impacting the development of the industry, as well as sharing best practice strategies for both service providers and businesses.

Software Defined Networks: Key technology trends are driving the need for new network architectures to better cope with today's dynamic computing needs. This new element in the Cloud Expo Europe 2015 line-up will shine a light on Software Defined Networking and its potential to optimise efficiency and resilience.

Club Service Provider: A new VIP global delegate programme for senior business leaders working for service providers, telcos, system integrators, VARs, resellers, ISVs, hosting businesses and the cloud ecosystem.

SEE US ON STAND 330 AT CLOUD EXPO 15

Levelling the playing field

Steven Harrison, Lead Technologist at Exponential-e looks at the role of the Cloud as an equaliser for UK businesses

According to a new report from the digital skills committee of the House of Lords, digital technology is changing our lives, work, society and politics - but the UK risks being left behind in this era unless its digital skills are improved.

However, as digital enables us to transition towards a new platform for innovation and growth - built on the pillars of mobile, Cloud services, big data, analytics and social networking - British businesses need to be equipped with the technical resources to compete. In order to survive in a digital economy, organisations need to be able to support the software and computing tools they need in a cost efficient and easy to manage environment.

CLOUD AS AN EQUALISER

If we accept that information and communication technology is a utility as indispensable as gas and electricity, it's important for businesses of all size to spend their limited time and energy focusing on how best to use the resources available to them. In particular, for those organisations that are smaller and more stretched, there is an opportunity to shift some of the low-value engine room bits of their IT workload over to external providers.

By adopting this approach, businesses can concentrate on building value within their organisation using computing resources. For example, time is better spent on configuring lead management and automated workflow tools than on managing the underlying email server that the business is dependent on. In other industries, such as visual effects or CAD/CAM engineering, the computing power is an all-important ingredient in the final product. However, for these businesses to grow and increase market share, it is more beneficial for them to invest time in delivering the finished product and not optimising IT resources so that they can scale to meet demand.

Larger businesses have the slack in their budgets and enough resources to ensure that a well skilled IT team can be staffed and maintained. However, smaller enterprises often don't have this capacity available to them. As a result, many are finding that going outside to a Cloud service provider is the answer to gaining access to the computing power that will allow them to level the playing field against larger competitors. By combining dedicated hardware with the burstable capacity and

enhanced functionality of the Cloud then businesses can scale resources on-demand to meet business requirements and achieve greater flexibility.

NO ONE-SIZE-THAT-FITS ALL

However, the complexity and variety of IT needs between organisations means that the utility model of computing is a challenge. Whereas gas and electricity are used in almost identical forms by all, organisations need to consider carefully the what, the when, the where and how of Cloud. Let's not forget the who - that is, who do you trust with that critical customer database or essential bit of operating software?

Businesses moving to the Cloud need to realise that each IT solution has pros and cons, and most businesses are best served by a combination of answers. The Cloud is no reason to abandon perfectly working on premise hardware, and internet connected Clouds come with their own concerns and challenges in both security and availability.

Fortunately when businesses approach the Cloud with eyes wide open, a sufficiently clear approach to the journey is taken. Businesses will find that there is an answer that will give them the perfect balance of cost, agility and scalability. Cloud is a journey, not a single great leap and organisations must prioritise those elements that will deliver the greatest business benefit. The final solution may end up being unique to them in a never before seen arrangement. Then is it possible to play with the big companies when you're up in the Clouds.

More info: www.exponential-e.com

A software-defined future

Tim Bury, Managing Director EMEA at Masergy, discusses the real-world applications and benefits of Software-Defined Networking

As global enterprises migrate to more financially sustainable IT initiatives, Software-Defined Networking (SDN) has quickly become a critical tool in the CIO's portfolio. The prospective benefits of cloud-based solutions are particularly compelling for organisations in the process of simplifying their corporate infrastructure. This includes a host of cost and efficiency benefits: real-time bandwidth allocation, a seamless global experience, automation of network controls and virtualisation of common network functions such as routing.

Our recent Cloud Router release demonstrates the appetite for software-defined solutions, as well as the advantages possible when intelligent connectivity powers an organisation. Cloud Router reduces the capital expenses of proprietary routing hardware and the admin costs associated with managing physical routers in corporate and branch offices. This ensures enterprises can migrate their current routing directly to the cloud to reclaim the space and costs involved with maintaining traditional equipment, which in turn allows faster network deployments and delivers more cost-effective IT strategies.

COMMUNICATING BENEFITS

Another area of IT undergoing rapid change is enterprise communications. Cloud-based Unified Communications (UC) is one of the fastest growing sectors in the market. Again, cost and flexibility are the main drivers: as organisations retire expensive PBX systems they are turning to the cloud for more cost conscious alternatives.

Unlike on-premise technology, the cloud never expires or becomes obsolete; it evolves. Maintenance and upgrades can occur with minimal disruption to users, while ongoing cost management becomes a clearer, more strategic process. Other benefits include detailed analytics and controls, disaster recovery improvements, and access to managed support to further increase IT efficiency. Software integrations and communications-based business processes are possible via APIs to meet the demands of a changing workplace, as well as ongoing regulatory compliance, hybrid deployment possibilities, increased application availability, and 24/7 monitoring for a more secure network.

An enterprise can thus strengthen its customer relationships, increase staff productivity, and support its mobile, distributed workforce effectively.

ALLEVIATING THE PRESSURE
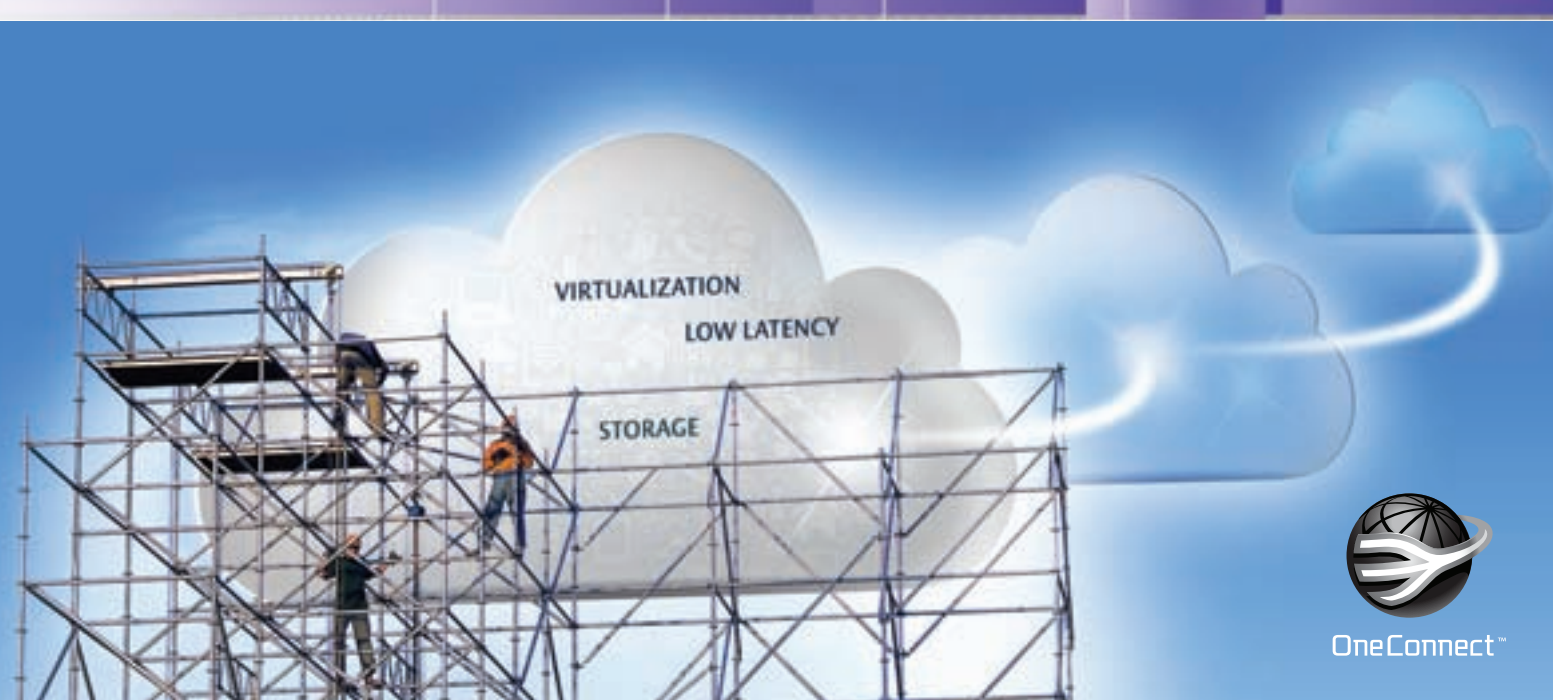
In practice, SDN begins with the decoupling of network functions from dedicated hardware and embedded software. The continuing growth in general purpose CPU power means many networking tasks that once required dedicated hardware can now be run on commodity hardware. Coupled with virtual machine technology, this allows a single vendor-agnostic server to perform multiple virtualised network functions that used to require separate dedicated devices.

Despite what some may think, the above does not require a forklift approach: managed service providers are there to alleviate the pressure. Once the current network infrastructure has been assessed and business processes that need integrating are identified, enterprises should opt for a phased approach that maintains a hybrid IT environment while simultaneously measuring how the network solution is initially performing.

Oneoption is to bring several corporate sites online first to see how the business responds. If that stage is successful, remaining offices, departments and employees can be integrated over time with a comprehensive deployment strategy. Following that, end-user training and on-boarding can occur.

The above highlights the flexibility and scalability possible from software-defined networking. Enterprises can connect locations seamlessly with superior performance and are supported by a customisable platform that grows alongside the business. In the long-term, this should ensure that any initial investment is quickly outstripped by the future business benefits.

More info: www.masergy.com

SEE US ON STAND 220 AT CLOUD EXPO 15

It´s an IT Jungle Out There!

Rainforest charity to benefit from iomart campaign being promoted at Cloud Expo '15

Cloud company iomart was recently chosen by Microsoft to be part of its Cloud Service Provider Program in Europe, as the IT giant looks to work with a number of selected CSPs globally to promote its Office 365 software to small and medium businesses. The company's first step in this new initiative will be the launch of an exciting celebrity-led campaign at this year's Cloud Expo. It's called 'Savethecloud 365' and will take place on iomart's Stand 220.

'Savethecloud 365' will be launched on the first day of Cloud Expo with a special guest appearance by 'I'm A Celebrity ….Get Me Out Of Here' contestant and ex-professional footballer, Jimmy Bullard. Jimmy will be present on iomart's stand to help promote how Office 365 can support remote and flexible working and simplify IT business management.

Phil Worms, Chief Marketing Officer for iomart, says, "Jimmy survived the jungle in Australia by being resourceful and learning to operate remotely from his friends and family. To survive the modern IT jungle, that's what a business has to do: by using resources that will help it to operate smarter and enable its workforce to be flexible."

As part of the campaign iomart is partnering with the environmental charity Rainforest Concern, which is helping to save part of the threatened Cloud Forest in Ecuador. For every Office 365 licence sold by iomart, a donation will be made to the charity to help it buy a portion of land in the Choco Andean Corridor in the north west of Ecuador which will protect the land for the indigenous population and the local wildlife.

Peter Bennett, Executive Director and Founder of Rainforest Concern, says, "We're delighted that iomart is supporting us through its 'Savethecloud 365' campaign. Ecuador is one of the most diverse regions for flora and fauna and has the highest density of mammals per metre anywhere in the world, and yet the Ecuadorian forest is disappearing at a rate
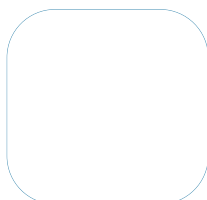

Photo by Murray Cooper for Rainforest Concern

"It's hardly surprising that people compare the IT marketplace to a jungle. It can be a wild and untamed place to be and difficult to navigate without a knowledgeable guide. It is this hypothetical wilderness that is leading more and more businesses to select a trusted advisor and 'cloud agnostic' single cloud service provider like iomart to assist them on their cloud journey."

of over 200,000 hectares a year. We are working to stop this and maintain the landscape so the birds, animals and local people can all continue to survive."

At the moment rangers working for the charity in the Cloud Forest often have to travel hundreds of miles to get to an internet-enabled or Wi-Fi facility to download the images and data they compile out in the field. Even then data transfers can be difficult. iomart's 'Savethecloud365' campaign will arm them with tablets loaded with Office 365 to enable them to work better and smarter.

Phil Worms explains, "What Office 365 allows you to do is take your office on the road. You can better communicate with colleagues, customers and get access to top level productivity tools. The applications mean you can create, edit, share and store content from your tablet, laptop and phone with anyone in real time and because it's via the cloud you can decide who has access to it whether they're inside or out of your organisation. We want to ensure the Rainforest Concern rangers enjoy these same benefits as they work on their important projects."

As iomart evolves as a cloud company it is building stronger relationships with the world's leading technology companies. Microsoft's vision is to empower people through technology and a cloud-first world and iomart has been chosen to help it achieve that. iomart will provide the technical support management and expertise to

support businesses who want to move to Office 365.

Bill Strain, Chief Technology Officer for iomart, says, "It's hardly surprising that people compare the IT marketplace to a jungle. It can be a wild and untamed place to be and difficult to navigate without a knowledgeable guide. It is this hypothetical wilderness that is leading more and more businesses to select a trusted advisor and 'cloud agnostic' single cloud service providers like iomart to assist them on their cloud journey. Choosing an expert Cloud Service Provider who you can build a lasting relationship with and who has the expertise to deliver a variety of requirements ensures you can architect services to meet your exact needs."

As an agnostic CSP iomart is expected by its customers to offer and support services from the world's leading vendors such as Microsoft, AWS, EMC, VMware, Dell and Asigra - ranging from public to private and hybrid cloud services and products which can give clear benefits in terms of cost, user engagement and productivity. With the addition to iomart's extensive portfolio of Microsoft's Office 365 - a truly collaborative service that enables people to take work from anywhere as easily as if they were sat at a desk in the office - iomart can help small and medium businesses in particular.

Back in 2013, the world renowned naturalist and broadcaster Sir David Attenborough famously told the Radio Times that he thought man had essentially stopped

evolving as a species. He cited computing as a key catalyst for man's development turning from a process of natural selection to one of technological evolution. Technology is becoming woven into the very fabric of our lives and how we decide to use that technology is part of this new evolution.

The cloud is now part of that enabling technology as we walk into the world of the Internet of Things where our everyday lives, our fitness and our health can be determined by the devices we choose to use. The data that we create by using these devices is going to create a new information age. We are working smarter than ever before and iomart and Microsoft are working together to support that.

To find out how Office365 can enable your business and find out more about iomart's 'Savethecloud365' campaign please visit Stand 220 at Cloud Expo. You might even get yourself a selfie with our own 'King of the Jungle', Jimmy Bullard.
More info: www.iomart.com

SEE US ON STAND 010 AT CLOUD EXPO 15

Storing up trouble?

Everett Dolgner, director of replication product management at Silver Peak, explains what you need to know about using the cloud for backup and recovery initiatives

The impact of virtualisation, cloud computing, and the need for data flexibility across cloud environments, all mean that storage has had to change with the times. Organisations are now turning to the cloud for backup and storage options. Cloud storage essentially enables you to store data remotely and is a classic example of the consumerisation of technology, where consumer markets come to drive IT innovation and propel it to the forefront.

However, while cloud-based storage offers businesses a number of benefits, organisations can often be faced with an unstable environment.

THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE UGLY

The amount of media hype around cloud is at an all time high. Some may argue that using a cloud service is cheaper than traditional computing; another common cloud value proposition is that it enables a more rapid transition to mobile computing. However, there's one use case for cloud that often falls under the radar - it enables better disaster recovery, which is something that many organisations, large and small, struggle with.

The ability to store data in the cloud has made life a lot easier for users - not only is it easy to sign up for and fast to implement, cloud-based storage is designed to be user-friendly, providing seemingly limitless availability of new capacity and access to enterprise class facilities. Traditional data apps are not mobile apps, however, once a data app is 'cloudified' it can offer many of the same advantages, such as access from anywhere that you can get signal, and on any connected device. However, when relying on the cloud for backup organisations can often be faced with an unstable environment. Cloud computing essentially involves the delivery of hosted services via a shared wide area network (WAN), such as the internet.

Regardless of the type of cloud initiative, they all have one thing in common - data is centralised, while users are distributed. This environment can be prone to instability, which

"Cloud computing essentially involves the delivery of hosted services via a shared WAN such as the internet. Regardless of the type of cloud computing initiative, they all have one thing in common - data is centralised, while users are distributed. This environment can be prone to instability, which can jeopardise entire storage investments."

can jeopardise entire storage investments.

Failing to address this and ensure a stable network, can lead to higher disaster recovery costs and missed Recovery Point Objectives (RPOs) and Recovery Time Objectives (RTOs). This can result in increased expenditures as organisations try to make up for limited replication throughput and poor connectivity by buying more WAN capacity.

It is therefore critical that organisations are aware that the only way to ensure optimal data delivery is to establish a fully equipped network that will be able to cope with the increased flow of traffic storage initiatives bring. To do this, organisations need to optimise the WAN, which can reduce over 90 percent of the traffic across the network and provide the scalability needed to support all current and emerging applications.

CONSIDERING THE OPTIONS

The prospect of storing data in the cloud can be daunting for some organisations, so there are a number of alternatives to cloud backup. These include traditional tape-based, disk-based or hybrid storage. A good option is off-site disk backup, which is an ideal business continuity upgrade for organisations that need the shortest possible recovery time when disaster strikes, but cannot afford to replicate their entire systems to a duplicate data centre.

When comparing these alternatives, disk backup is almost always faster than tape, because there are none of the data-seek or media mount delays typical of tape. With tape, you have to wait for the media and the

drive to become ready before you can access the data.

The key thing for business continuity and disaster recovery is that the disk backup is off-site, either at a secondary site, or at a co-location centre. The challenge for many organisations will therefore be the WAN traffic involved in doing that disk-based offsite backup - and, of course, recovery.

DON'T GET STRANDED IN THE CLOUD

Technical requirements need to be carefully considered as data that is stranded in the cloud is useless. If business critical data is going to be protected in the cloud, there needs to be a way to restore the data into a Virtual Machine (VM), or onto a physical server, for rapid recovery. If the data must be downloaded first, the solution should not be used for anything critical.

Bandwidth at the provider also needs to be considered, as any limitation can reduce the speed to backup or recover, jeopardising RPOs and RTOs. Furthermore, retention at the cloud provider also needs to be taken into account. Any corruption or virus that spreads over time will require a restore to a specific point in time, which could go back several days, weeks, or even months. If the provider only stores a limited amount of data for restore, the business could be at risk in the event of data loss.

Finally, the cloud provider's business health needs to be addressed very carefully. There are many providers that have started quickly with limited funding, and having all of your

corporate data stored with one of these providers can put the business at risk. Even providers with well-known funding sources have failed recently, leaving business exposed to data loss. So, when planning for disaster recovery it is important to make sure that data and applications are protected properly.

There are several different methods to perform backups, but choosing the correct method is determined by the value of the data, and the organisations' tolerance for loss. Business critical data should be replicated to a remote disaster recovery site, allowing for short RTO. This same data should also have snapshots taken for local recovery, and rollback in the event of a corruption.

Continuous Data Protection (CDP) is another option for fast local recovery, and most of these tools even include replication of some type. This data can also be backed up to disk, tape, or the cloud, for an additional level of protection. These create many copies of the same data, and the real guide to which should be implemented will come from the business requirements.

Ultimately, it's up to the organisation to decide whether cloud storage is the right path for them. Many will reap the benefits that storing data in the cloud has to offer, but only if they have a fully equipped network and the right tools in place. Failing to do this will result in the cloud investment either underperforming or failing entirely - a risk that today's businesses cannot afford if they wish to stay competitive.
More info: www.silver-peak.com

**SEE US ON STAND 1030
AT CLOUD EXPO 15**

Hybrid: the 'best-fit' strategy

According to Sean McAvan, Managing Director of NaviSite Europe, a hybrid cloud approach offers the best of both worlds for business: embracing the new, while getting the most out of existing IT investments

Cloud computing is here to stay. Businesses around the world are enhancing scalability and agility by adopting mobile and social technologies, which are mostly powered by the cloud. They are leveraging the cloud to re-strategise and design alternate, cost-effective business models and offer exciting new services to customers. And the cloud is also fuelling a digital transformation that is driving enhanced efficiency, productivity and cost savings.

As enterprises increasingly recognise the significant value and opportunity that cloud computing presents, they continue to invest in and grow their cloud strategy. According to Gartner, the use of cloud computing is growing, and by 2016 this growth will increase to become the bulk of new IT spend.

In spite of this, Gartner estimates that, by 2020, on-premise cloud will still account for 70 per cent of the total market and VMware CEO Pat Gelsinger stated that, currently, over 92 per cent of cloud deployments are still on-premise or private. Indeed, in NaviSite's own recent survey of over 250 UK and US IT professionals, over 89 per cent of UK

respondents stated that deploying some sort of private cloud and hybrid infrastructure is a priority within the next 12 months.

There are many good reasons to still opt for applications on hardware owned and managed in-house. Most organisations still have large investments in technology, people, and processes that cannot simply be written-off; certain workloads still do not suit virtualised or multi-tenanted platforms; renting resources is not always cheaper or better than owning them; and there are valid security and compliance reasons for keeping certain data on-premise.

OPENING THE DOOR FOR HYBRID
In spite of these concerns, however, the public cloud continues to grow at a ferocious rate, validating the benefits that this infrastructure delivery model offers. That certain data and workloads are better suited for a private cloud infrastructure therefore seems to be the caveat that opens the door to hybrid solutions. Although many UK businesses have migrated certain applications, over three quarters of respondents in NaviSite's recent survey had migrated

under fifty per cent of their infrastructure to the cloud.

A hybrid solution gives organisations the option of scaling resources for specific workloads and running applications on the most appropriate platform for a particular given task. A highly dynamic application with varying spikes may be best supported in the public cloud, whilst a performance-intensive application may be better suited running from the private cloud. Furthermore, a hybrid solution allows an organisation to place their data where regulatory or security requirements dictate. This is significant as 59 per cent of UK IT professionals surveyed by NaviSite still cite security as their main concern with cloud migration.

Hybrid continues to grow as it is the solution that offers organisations the best of both worlds. For IT leaders, a hybrid strategy that pragmatically embraces the new, whilst making best use of current-state is essential. By going hybrid, today's IT leaders can pick the best-fit strategy for the current demands of their business, within a flexible framework that will enable them to manage future change.
More info: www.navisite.co.uk

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**SEE US ON STAND 1160
AT CLOUD EXPO 15**

End of the road?

The announcement that support and security updates for Microsoft Windows Server 2003 are to end this year provides the impetus for change, argues Dave Leyland, head of Architecture Data Centre and Cloud at Dimension Data

Life is full of crossroads which require big decisions to be made and, on the 14th July 2015, those reliant on Windows Server 2003 will be faced with such an event. The end of the OS has long been rumoured, but Microsoft has announced that the end is indeed nigh and that it will no longer be issuing security updates.

Gartner reports that there are still eight million user instances of the server in operation and that 1.6 million will continue to be in use even after the end-of-support date. For companies that are included in that eight million, they need to decide how they will continue to run their applications.

CARRY ON REGARDLESS?
Firstly, they could continue running their applications on OS 2003. Some companies will have applications that are reliant on the software and aren't compatible with more modern versions. Of course, the biggest drawback to this is that, without Microsoft's security updates, they will be completely by themselves in combating cyber attacks. The internet isn't a safe place and the cyber war fight is certainly not one you want be fighting alone.

Secondly, they could update their servers to run a newer OS and install new applications to replace ones that aren't compatible. This can be an incredibly expensive option, but depending on the investment, can future proof the company for a number of years. Indeed, running individual servers still remains a popular option as companies feel that they can maintain better control of their networks.

Alternatively, they could start running their applications in the cloud. Known for its cost effectiveness and efficiency, cloud computing is now in common use by companies of all sizes. Furthermore, the upkeep of the servers is the responsibility of the cloud service provider, meaning software and security updates will be included as part of the ongoing fee - no longer an expensive but necessary one-off cost.

Software end of life and OS migrations are of course just one driver for considering change. The need to right-size server and data centre investment is one of the most pressing challenges facing businesses today. The merits of building additional data centre facilities to cope with additional capacity requirements - actual or anticipated - need to be carefully considered, given the hefty CapEx involved. Then there's timing to consider: building a new data centre is a 20-year investment, yet the industry is in a state of flux and evolving at an unprecedented rate. How can you accurately predict how much data centre space you'll need in two decades' time? Traditional planning approaches that don't include the notion of cloud will likely leave you with excess capacity and idle resources. Contrary to popular belief, a large percentage of businesses have over-planned their investments considerably and will be looking to shrink - rather than grow - their environments over the next few years.

Ultimately, whilst the end of life of OS 2003 may be a nuisance to users, it's actually a bit of a blessing. Too many organisations don't advance their technology quickly enough and often find themselves falling behind. An end of life announcement provides the impetus needed to embrace new technology and, when looking at the bigger picture, that can only be a positive.
More info: www.dimensiondata.com

Big Data, big decisions

Omer Wilson, director at Digital Realty, discusses what data centre providers must offer their clients in this age of big data if they are to be successful in future

The systematic analysis of corporate data to find and gain a competitive edge is not exactly a new phenomenon. Business intelligence derived from past, current and incoming data to seek insights and support more informed strategic decisions has been taking place for well over twenty years.

The volume, sources and complexities of dealing with this data, however, have changed dramatically and those changes continue today. Businesses are increasingly aware of the potential value to be gained from this knowledge and then distributing it across different business lines and job titles.

Cloud-enabled connectivity of data within and across businesses - and their partners, supply chain and customers - along with the vast changes that both business and consumer technology have enabled (smart meters, smart buildings and smart phones to connected manufacturing lines) - has also served to uncover and create new problems with traditional tools and approaches.

THE SAME, BUT MORE

Working with very large data sets is not a new challenge to many industry sectors these days. What's more, through working with these data sets, the financial services, retail and e-commerce, healthcare and pharmaceuticals industries have found that it is the quality of and access to the data that really matters.

Add to that the expanding nature and breadth of the day-to-day operations of businesses and we start to get an idea of the impact of these changes on both the technology and business sides of the table. Not only must information be discovered, verified and distributed, it must be quickly, easily and economically stored and accessed.

THE SAME, BUT DIFFERENT

Enterprise-scale businesses have for a long time collected and processed data about customers, competitors, transactions and trends in order to drive market success. The sheer scale of this data and the wide range of topics it now impacts mean that today businesses of all sizes are accessing and benefitting from this kind of data. Also at issue are a myriad of new concerns ranging from the timely and targeted distribution of knowledge through to issues around the governance, control and retention of the vast amounts of data across an uneven international regulatory playing field.

BIG DATA: A USE CASE FOR PARTNERSHIPS

When choosing their data centre provider, every business wants more consistent, cost-effective, and real-time access to Data. But this needs to be done with an accurate delivery of dispersed data environments and the infrastructure required.

So, with the data environment as a key driver, data centre providers must deliver configurable, scalable infrastructures, ready to adapt to the steadily increasing data loads and needs of their clients. The best providers will include a sophisticated stack to ensure availability and fitness for purpose.

Done well, this will enable data centre providers to deliver on twin fronts. Firstly, it will allow for greater performance and reduced energy consumption. Consequently, this will extend and improve the ability to deliver predictive functionality, covering everything from storage requirements and IT loads to cooling metrics. In this way the second benefit becomes clear, as data centre providers can ensure even more accurate forecasts to help clients optimise performance and resource utilisation across all flavours of computing models.

Exploiting Big Data is a modern necessity for success. Data centre providers have a duty to ensure that clients can store, access and deliver this valuable asset across their organisation in the most optimal manner. If this duty is carried out, it will allow clients to convert their IT and computing spend into measurable ROI and ensuring they maintain their focus and time on core business operations.
More info: www.digitalrealty.co.uk

Open, for business

Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce manages its members with the flexibility of CRM in the cloud

Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce (GMCC) is an independent, not-for-profit private organisation and the largest Chamber of Commerce in the UK, with approximately 4,500 members. GMCC provides first-class business support to companies of all shapes and sizes across Greater Manchester, through a range of sector-based membership services. The Chamber supports and influences key government decision-makers and is regularly consulted for feedback from the business community when government policy is being developed, both locally and nationally.

GMCC is the leading business-led employer engagement body in Greater Manchester and is delivering the most successful Employer Ownership of Skills (EOS) scheme in the UK to support Greater Manchester employers to invest in their current and future workforce through skills and development training. With the EOS scheme, employers in sectors including construction, technology, engineering, finance and healthcare, are able to develop proposals to raise new skills, create jobs and drive enterprise growth.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF MEMBERS

As an organisation that works closely with all sectors as well as senior officials from both the government and business community, it is vital for GMCC to have a thorough understanding of its membership base in order to coordinate its service to members effectively, including arranging appointments and storing member details.

When it was asked to deliver the government's EOS pilot scheme, the performance of the CRM solution GMCC had in place was evaluated to see if it was fit for purpose and could meet the demands of the growth in membership processes. GMCC had been using an in-house CRM solution for many years and it was determined that for this new project it could no longer provide the speed and flexibility needed. GMCC consequently decided it was time to reconsider its in-house IT.

Christian Spence, Head of Research & Business Intelligence: "There is quite a lot of information which we build up and store on each of our members, including information about the different contacts and services within each organisation. Scalability and speed to market are two crucial aspects of the day-to-day running of our organisation. With greater business activity and member engagement than ever before, and consequently more strain on in-house CRM resources due to the introduction of EOS, we required a faster, more sophisticated solution which the previous platform simply could not deliver. Integrating our skills team with the rest of the company was a key priority to optimise processes, and we needed a solution that could provide that."

INFRASTRUCTURE ANALYSIS AND CONSULTATION

After a competitive tender process GMCC approached Outsourcery looking for a reliable cloud-based CRM system that could be implemented efficiently, with the scalability and functionality required to cope with the increase in operations and a growing membership structure. GMCC decided that Outsourcery's offering was the most suitable for the migration to a cloud-based solution, due to its reputation as a cloud expert, the fact that it is a highly respected Manchester-based company and Outsourcery's capability for providing a more
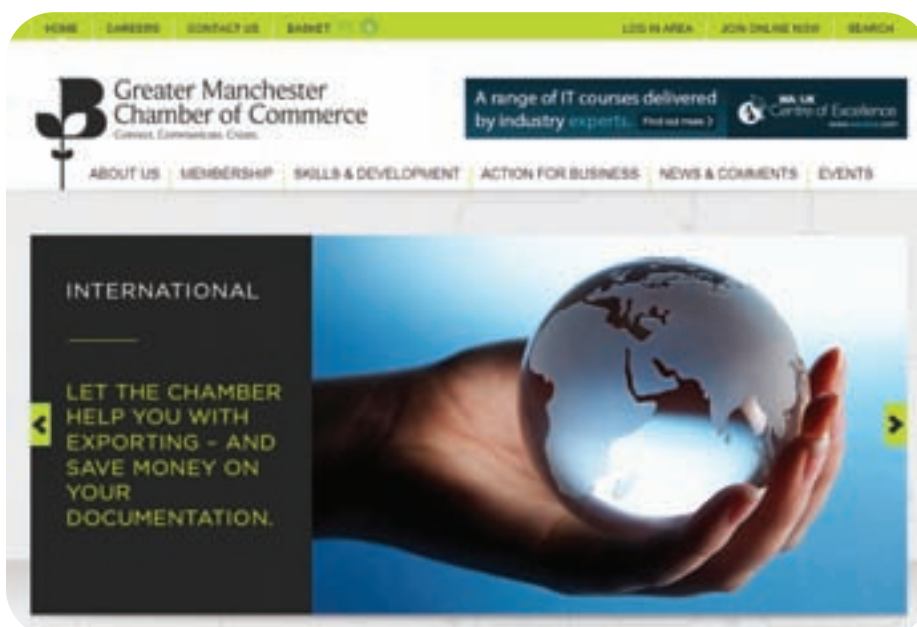
"We've already seen some immediate cost benefits in terms of being able to deploy cloud-based CRM quickly and economically. The Dynamics CRM system provides flexible, top quality service levels, enabling us to increase efficiency of processes better than we could have ever imagined."

productive CRM solution.

Spence explained: "With clear expertise in providing cloud- based solutions, Outsourcery was the obvious choice to partner with on this project, with its ability to migrate our system to a scalable solution as quickly as possible, effectively enhancing and improving our business operations ready to deal with the integration of the EOS scheme into the Chamber's core business. Outsourcery demonstrated that it could deliver an effective and viable solution within a small time frame, which aided us immensely considering our tight deadlines to get the new system up and running."

EASE OF IMPLEMENTATION

Outsourcery implemented a CRM system built on Dynamics CRM, a Microsoft solution, hosted on Outsourcery's O-Cloud platform and delivered on best-of-breed HP technology. The cloud-based solution enables faster delivery of information between employees and customers working across multiple locations. It also offers an assessment of customer behaviour through a 360-degree view of all business interactions, providing users with all the information needed to improve future service and performance.

In addition to Dynamics CRM, Outsourcery offers a broad range of other hosted solutions built on the Microsoft cloud platform, including Unified Lync, Cloud Mail and Office 365. As a Microsoft Gold CRM Partner and a member of Microsoft's Cloud OS network, Outsourcery is able to bring resilient, secure and flexible cloud services to end-users, with the combined expert knowledge of both cloud and widely

used-applications in the market.

MIGRATION AND SUPPORT

Spence explained: "Since the initial implementation, we have received ongoing support from Outsourcery, in particular assistance with migration and integration challenges in the lead up to the product launch, as well as getting GMCC employees familiarised with the system - something the whole team found very beneficial. Outsourcery has given us an assigned, dedicated account manager for this purpose and we have built up a great relationship with our counterparts over at Outsourcery. The nature of our organisation and the fact that we are always looking to improve on our membership scheme, means that a certain degree of flexibility and ongoing assistance will always be needed and Outsourcery understands this, offering us the support we need, when we need it."

Spence continues: "We've found the new CRM system incredibly intuitive and easy to use and whenever we have had an issue, there has been somebody there supporting us all the way through it, from the development and training stage through to everyday use. As GMCC is continually improving its EOS scheme, with skills and development services, we have a close relationship with Outsourcery to help whenever changes take place, in order to strengthen this part of our business."

FLEXIBILITY OF ARCHITECTURE

Spence adds: "Through the implementation of Outsourcery's cloud-based Dynamics CRM we are now able to arrange appointments and process member information more efficiently than we could with our previous in-house CRM

tool. The key advantage of CRM from Outsourcery is in its scalable architecture, which gives us the flexibility we need to adjust to a constantly changing membership database. CRM has played an integral role in the management of the EOS scheme and the added increase in member operations, enabling GMCC to propel business processes more efficiently.

"Having been introduced to the wider capabilities of the cloud, GMCC is now keen to maximise its potential and expand on it across the business in the future. Alongside our EOS scheme, we have a core focus to begin creating a bespoke service for members and as a result of this, GMCC will continue to rely on Outsourcery's guidance with enhancing the CRM solution to adjust to changes going forward.

"We've already seen some immediate cost benefits in terms of being able to deploy cloud-based CRM quickly and economically. The Dynamics CRM system provides flexible, top quality service levels, enabling us to increase efficiency of processes better than we could have ever imagined", Spence concludes.

Since the delivery of the original project in April 2013, GMCC has recently contracted Outsourcery to deliver an upgrade to its cloud-based CRM system, combining the additional benefits of Microsoft's latest CRM 2015 solution alongside Outsourcery's own dedicated cloud server infrastructure and looks forward to the successful delivery of this latest development in the Outsourcery and Chamber partnership in spring 2015.
More info: www.outsourcery.co.uk

Understanding the colocation advantage

With recent industry experts declaring the demise of colocation Rowland Kinch, CEO of Custodian Data Centres, explains why he believes that colocation is still the best solution for many organisations
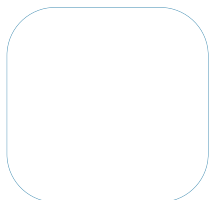
As more and more companies are shifting from individual servers to networked systems as well as relying on being online, businesses are realising that the original benefit of running your own server room - so your servers are close to your own office location - is being outweighed by the advantages of a colocation solution. Many companies do not realise that you could save money and have greater resilience in a data centre.

Reductions in operational expenditure and the ability to focus your IT team on your core business, means that data centres offer organisations the ability to maximise the potential within their businesses. Do businesses have a team where people are available 24/7/365 to reboot the server or air conditioning when it fails at 3am? Colocation companies specialise in data centre and network services, so they don't have to.

For financial directors and IT directors, colocation provides the perfect win-win scenario, providing cost savings and delivering state-of-the-art infrastructure. When you compare the capabilities of a standard comms or server room versus a colocation solution an assessment of the power alone demonstrates the gap between an in-house solution versus utilising the expertise of a specialist.

POWER STRUGGLE

Whilst many in-house server rooms have access to power and may well have air conditioning and battery backups, this system does not fully protect an organisation's infrastructure. Organisations need to consider whether their power solution, as well as the raw cost, also include diverse power feeds and distribution paths, with dual generator systems that can

"Cloud does not provide organisations with a fully auditable system and the ability to have full control over their own infrastructure. Colocation often enables businesses to avoid spending money on storage bills in the cloud as it is often cheaper to store information on their own servers." - *Rowland Kinch, CEO, Custodian Data Centres*

be refuelled whilst in operation - as well as onsite fuel reserves? Do they have diverse cooling systems, with UPS support in place? Who is monitoring their power and battery levels 24/7? Do they have a 100% uptime solution?

For an IT director, moving from an in-house solution to a data centre is like providing a go-kart driver with an F1 vehicle. When it comes to connectivity, colocation means a business is connected globally, quickly and securely. We find that many companies with onsite server rooms often do not have onsite access to a fast uncontended resilient internet connection with dedicated personnel monitoring traffic flow to ensure that you always remain on.

In fact colocation enables organisations to benefit from faster networking and resilient connectivity at a fairly low price - as delivering 100 mbps of bandwidth might be hard at an office location and trying to create a redundant solution is often financially unviable. Data centres are connected to multiple transit providers and also have large bandwidth pipes meaning that businesses often benefit from a better service for less cost.

With these considerations in mind, some organisations start to look to cloud solutions rather than colocation in the first instance. Cloud does not provide organisations with a fully auditable system and the ability to have

full control over their own infrastructure. Colocation often enables businesses to avoid spending money on storage bills in the cloud as it is often cheaper to store information on their own servers.

HIDDEN COSTS

From the periodic necessary replacement of UPS batteries, to the maintenance and testing of UPS systems, cooling and chiller solutions, generator and fire suppression systems, to pest control, the hidden costs of sustaining your infrastructure to optimal levels can be surprising. Indeed as part of a standard colocation solution, organisations instantly benefit from high level security with ISO 27001 accredited processes, onsite security teams and infrastructure.

Additionally, data centres have the time, resource and impetus to continually invest and research in green technologies, meaning that not only can businesses reduce their own carbon footprints at their own office locations, they are also benefitting from continual efficiency saving research. Companies who move their servers from in-house server rooms typically save 90% on their own carbon emissions.

GET OUT OF TOWN

Choosing a colocation provider away from a city or data centre hub with optimal connectivity options, both to the capital, Europe and further afield means there are the advantages of all central data centres,

with the added benefits of having attractive power capabilities and the security of being away from being affected from centrally targeted terrorist activity - something that many audits now require. Out-of-town colocation providers mean that businesses can take full advantage of the capital's infrastructure without the premium costs associated with it.

A colocation solution provides companies with a variety of opportunities, with exceptional SLAs and having data secured off-site, providing organisations with added levels of risk management and the chance to invest in better equipment and state-of-the-art servers. This can enable IT teams the possibility to explore options such as virtualisation and condense the amount of racks and servers required.

Most IT directors understand that their equipment is mission critical to their organisation - colocation providers are able to meet business requirements at a lower cost than if the service was kept in-house. Data centres and colocation providers have the ability to have businesses up and running within hours, as well as provide the flexibility to grow alongside your organisation. Colocation space, power, bandwidth and connection speeds can all be increased where required to ensure that all sizes of colocation clients can be catered for.
More info: www.custodiandc.com

Make mine a double

Iconic wine merchant Oddbins is using Rackspace Managed Cloud services to power its website as it aims to double online sales by improving the shopping experience of its e-Commerce customers

Oddbins, the well-known high-street wine merchant, has upgraded its e-Commerce infrastructure to a Rackspace dedicated solution which is, according to Oddbins, five times faster than the one its previous vendor provided. The new solution offers a managed web application stack, enhanced security and the unmatched performance of a bare metal server to support the firm's ambitious growth plans for 2015, by the end of which it aims to have doubled website sales.

Oddbins decided to change its e-Commerce strategy, looking for a new hosting provider after facing a number of challenges when working with the previous system. One of these problems occurred when a bottle of wine from the Oddbins range was featured on television: as several hundred viewers visited the Oddbins website to buy the product, they were unable to add it to the online shopping cart due to a problem with the infrastructure and many sales were lost as a result.

Tony Duffy, e-Commerce Manager of Oddbins says: "We had lost confidence in the website's performance reaching the standards we expect, especially when dealing with spikes of traffic around busy periods such as holidays. This created two significant problems. One is that we lost revenue due to customers being unable to make purchases and the other is reputational damage caused by these negative experiences."

THREE WAY SOLUTION

The top three requirements that Oddbins looked for from a new hosting provider were; strong support, the capability to roll out a solution quickly and enhanced security. The support and fast provisioning were important so that the e-Commerce team could start preparing for upcoming traffic spikes straight away knowing that implementation issues could be fixed without taking up much resource. Using a robust, secure solution was the other top priority because when working with the previous hosting provider, an attack on the website had caused it to go down. Each of these requirements is closely identified with a Rackspace bare metal solution, so it represented an ideal solution for Oddbins.

Rackspace Dedicated Server Solutions offers a dedicated server, firewall and access to a high level of expertise. This includes managed backup and monitoring running alongside an industry-leading Managed SLA, which has a 100% network uptime guarantee.

Duffy continues: "Almost immediately, the enthusiasm and efficiency shown by the Rackspace team restored my confidence in the website being something we could be proud of while supporting our plans for growth. In the past, it was down to us to think of ideas on how to improve the site, but now we regularly receive useful insight from Rackspace, which is incredibly valuable to us. Above all, using the Rackspace solution means that we don't have to worry about website infrastructure maintenance anymore and can instead concentrate on what we do best selling our products."

Jeff Cotten, MD Rackspace International comments: "Our Managed Cloud Services are making retailers feel more at ease during busy sales periods, by offering access to a team of experts who can field enquiries and monitor the website to maintain ongoing high performance. Specialist shops have huge competition from the big supermarket chains, which only increases the need for a reliable infrastructure so they can focus on new revenue opportunities. Looking forward, we are in discussions about progressing to a Hybrid Cloud next year which will continue to improve the shopping experience for the growing number of website visitors."
More info: www.rackspace.co.uk

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