Tracking Your Fasteners

by:

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The Cloud is the Next New Thing – Or Is It?

"Cloud Computing" is all the rage. The concept behind Cloud Computing is that you will have all of your data processing handled by a remote computer that you will access over the Internet. The principal advantages are that your data processing function will be supported by a group of professionals in a secure location, and you won't have to buy a server. That's all fine, but is it new? I think not.

ADP Did It First

Automatic Data Processing (ADP) is a company with about US$10 billion in revenues and approximately 570,000 clients. It's one of the world's largest providers of business outsourcing solutions. Leveraging over 60 years of experience, ADP offers a wide range of human resource, payroll, tax and benefits administration solutions from a single source. ADP's easy-to-use solutions for employers provide superior value to companies of all types and sizes. They have been providing "Cloud Computing" for over 60 years.

Differences

There are differences, to be sure. In order to use ADP in the old days, your company would have proprietary dumb terminals that connected to the ADP server through dedicated lines. Now, any PC, laptop or even a mobile device can connect to the Cloud. In the old days, ADP had huge mainframe computers that your company would connect to, while today, there are racks of PCs and your data may share one of those PCs in what is called a Virtual Machine.

Managing Growth

Today, Cloud services include an expectation of scalability, agility and value-for-money on a pay-as-you-go basis. It is really about challenging the fundamentals of how you manage IT operations efficiently in an on-line world. If your company is growing exponentially, the Cloud might be a perfect answer to providing reliable, scalable and always available IT services. The pay-as-you-go billing model also conserves capital and allows the rapidly growing company to expense its IT costs when they are needed. There is no need to be concerned about hardware capacity or security. Additional operations can be brought into the system quickly and with a minimum of effort on the part of existing personnel.

Not for Everyone & Not For Everything

Even the **Cloud Industry Forum (CIF)** does not advocate that all business will move into a wholly on-line delivery model.

The Forum fully recognizes that any combination of technical, commercial, cultural and governance issues will require some aspect of an on-premises presence for most organizations for the foreseeable future.

Certain Applications Are Naturals for the Cloud

At **Computer Insights, Inc.**, we have a few clients who have moved their servers to the Cloud. Since we maintain our clients' servers remotely and they have virtually no concern about the details of their server, there has not been very much call for moving the entire database. Also, clients tend to worry that if their Internet went down, they would be separated from their critical information and effectively "out of business" until they got it back up.

Nevertheless, most of our clients have moved certain applications to the Cloud, while keeping the main IT server in the corporate office. Examples of applications that we have moved to the Cloud for our clients include data backups, mobile app integration and eCommerce. Having data backups at a remote location and under the supervision of trained professionals with redundant hardware adds peace of mind for the client. It is inexpensive and effective.

Mobile devices need to be able to talk to the in-house system today, but security and transaction frequency could be a problem for the in-house server. A Cloud server can gather this information, make a copy of it and perform the uploads or queries in a controlled manner. This ensures security and levels transaction activity.

eCommerce applications can generate a large number of transactions including inquiries, quote requests, order placement, etc. There is no way to tell how much activity might be generated. Having this application on a Cloud server makes perfect sense.

Large Firms Save Money - Small Firms Gain Agility

In general, most large companies that adopt the Cloud for some of their applications seem to do it in order to save money. Smaller companies, those with fewer than 100 employees, tend to adopt the Cloud to gain agility, rather than save money.

The Cloud Industry Forum (CIF)

The CIF was established as a not-for-profit industry body in direct response to the evolving supply models for the delivery of software and IT services. The CIF's aim is to provide much needed clarity for end users when assessing and selecting Cloud Service Providers based upon the clear, consistent and relevant provision of key information about the organizations, their capabilities and operational commitments.

2012 CIF Report Describes Concerns

According to the CIF, the physical location of data was another area of concern for Cloud users. Between 59% and 83% of users said they were required to store data in specific locations. The key reasons for specific locations were cited as security (85%), regulation (64%), size of database (63%) and levels of integration with other applications (52%). Some 60% required data to be stored in the USA, a further 26% required data to be stored in the USA or Canada, while 9% included Europe as a required/acceptable storage location.

Cloud is Going to be Part of Your Future

Whether it is moving specific applications to the Cloud or moving your entire computer operation to the Cloud, it is clear that some part of what you are doing in-house now, will be in the Cloud sooner, rather than later.

Dennis, R. Cowhey, CEO – Started **Computer Insights** in 1981. He served for many years on the **Illinois CPA Society Computer Information Systems Committee**. He is a frequent author of articles for industry trade magazines. Before starting Computer Insights, he served as Central District Manager for a division of **Litton Industries** (now part of **Rockwell**), that offered inventory control systems to retailers. Prior to that, he was a Credit and Financial Analyst for National Credit Office division of **Dun & Bradstreet, Inc**. Cowhey received his education at **Chicago City College** and **DePaul University**.

Computer Insights provides the fastener industry with The BUSINESS EDGE 2.0 software for efficient tracking of fasteners.

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