Capitalizing on the Cloud: How Migrating Can Benefit Manufacturers and Distributors

Smart Cloud-Based Analytics: Not “Pie in the Sky” Promises
Making Vital Connections for a New Job

By: Ann Gallaher, COO, Technology First

The TechAmerica Foundation has predicted that occupational growth in the information technology sector will grow at the rate of 17% over the next 10 years. Data from the EMSI states that there are nearly 21,000 IT professionals working in the greater Dayton region with two-thirds of them in non-IT industries.

Coupled with the fact that an average annual wage for an IT professional is $72,600 vs $42,000 for the average annual wage in other professions – the outlook for the profession remains strong.

Following our mission to create forums to enable individuals and businesses to share knowledge, learn new skills and seek new opportunities, on Wednesday, June 12th Technology First hosted a job fair at Sinclair Community College. We are pleased that the event attracted over 100 job seekers interested in some of the open positions which included database developer, software engineer, business analyst and project manager.

Interest in the event from member companies was encouraging. Participating companies included: Crown Equipment, Hobart Services, Speedway, VRI, Net Gain, Yaskawa Motoman, Teradata, Montgomery County, Seque Technologies, New Horizons Learning Center, and Sogeti.

The post event feedback was positive from both employers and job seekers.

"I loved the fact that many companies had their HR managers on site!"

"Well organized. Good space. Well attended.
Kind regards-The Recruiting Team"

"It had a variety of employers which had a mixture of technical positions available, which made the job fair well rounded."

"This was my first job fair, so I don't have anything to compare it to but I enjoyed it and felt I made some good contacts and got my resume out."

"I had a great conversation with the Sinclair Community College Internship Coordinator...I eagerly look forward to working with her to start a program here."

If you missed the job fair there are still numerous ways to learn about new opportunities. Job seekers can visit the Employment Exchange section of Technology First website at www.technologyfirst.org. Also, while there sign up for the job seekers email list serv and you will receive the latest information as companies post jobs.

Special thanks to Dayton Power & Light, our job fair sponsor, for their interest in growing and retaining an IT workforce in the greater Dayton region!
A growing number of companies are moving data and business applications to the cloud with the potential of increased flexibility and decreased costs through diminished need for infrastructure, staff and software. Information is stored in a central repository, allowing multiple facilities to access data and information through a single portal. Several cloud strategies could potentially make sense for manufacturers and distributors, although the right timing and implementation strategy are always key considerations.

These technologies have matured and are being adopted by enterprises large and small. Strategies typically consider three levels of cloud offerings:

1. **Software as a Service (SaaS)** – Applications delivered to the end-user directly from an external host provider over the Internet (example: NetSuite®, Microsoft Dynamics® CRM, Microsoft Office 365TM, etc.)

2. **Platform as a Service (PaaS)** – External host vendor provides for the support of the entire application environment—development, testing, deployment, run-time, hosting, delivery (example: Microsoft Azure, Google, etc.)

3. **Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS)** – The delivery of infrastructure resources such as computing, storage and network—as a service by external vendors (example Rackspace, AT&T, McGladrey, etc.)

It is important to realize that these offerings are building blocks with IaaS as the foundation (as depicted below). IaaS can be procured as a separate service but is included if you contract for PaaS or SaaS services. Similarly, IaaS and PaaS are included if you contract for SaaS services.

**Software as a Service (SaaS)**

A SaaS solution allows companies to purchase and utilize software on demand in the cloud. Several very robust traditional and manufacturing-centric applications have been developed that can be purchased and deployed as cloud-based solutions. With Office 365 and other desktop applications now offered online, companies do not have to make a significant upfront capital software investment, and can quickly adjust use up or down for seasonal business needs. These cloud applications also reduce the amount of IT staff and infrastructure needed to maintain the solution. Upgrades are handled remotely and only a Web browser, router and Internet connection are needed to access software from a warehouse, office or factory floor.

SaaS applications such as NetSuite® enable organizations to run their entire business value chain—ecommerce to marketing to lead to quote to fulfillment to cash—in a single source platform without the need for infrastructure. SaaS strategies also provide more effective collaboration across facilities. For example, if a company utilizes SharePoint® in the cloud, it is easier to share important documents, processes and procedures versus each facility maintaining their own IT staff and SharePoint sites. Multiple locations don’t have to be physically part of the same wide area network (WAN) to enable collaboration.

**Platform as a Service (PaaS)**

PaaS solutions facilitate the hosting and operation of custom applications in the cloud, as companies rent the back-end software licenses that are required for use. For example, licenses can be obtained from Microsoft for SQL Server® or Windows Server® to host a custom application. Operating systems, server systems, the database and other technical components that are a part of the application or required to make an application run, can be provisioned through the cloud via PaaS solutions.

**Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS)**

IaaS platforms provide companies with virtual storage and hardware, deploying systems in a public or private cloud environment. IaaS allows you to redistribute your IT resources that are dedicated to in-house on-premise infrastructure. In addition to gaining additional resources, this strategy also enables quick and easy seasonal fluctuations as your needs scale. Organizations can implement more servers or SAN disk space without needing to place an order for hardware.

**Managing Needs as the Company Evolves**

With the improved economy, many mergers and acquisitions are occurring in the manufacturing and distribution industries. Whether a company is scaling up because of a purchase or scaling down through a divestiture or a sale, cloud-based solutions are often more affordable rather than buying perpetual licenses up front. Under a cloud solution, usage can be dialed up or back as necessary—this capability gives you more agility to adjust your IT footprint, based on the current needs of the business.

**Timing is Critical**

It is important to time your move to a cloud environment to coincide with significant business initiatives or technology capital investments (i.e. technology refresh, core system replacement, etc.). You will not realize immediate payback if you have sunk investments that will, for example, require you to purchase additional software licenses when you may have already invested in perpetual licenses or technology that has not achieved end-of-life.

The most effective cloud deployments involve moving a significant amount of software and infrastructure at once (or in a short timeframe) usually in conjunction with a large-scale business or technology transformation. If a company stagers movement to the cloud, personnel (and the associated costs) are still needed to manage on-premise solutions as they wait for migration and those resources and funding must wait for deployment to other areas.

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Smart Cloud-Based Analytics: Not “Pie in the Sky” Promises

By: Scott Gnau, Teradata

For much of cloud computing’s history – from the cumulus imagery used in early diagrams depicting the interconnectedness of a nascent Internet, to the term’s first public use in San Jose at a 2006 search conference and beyond – Teradata has been in a position to capitalize on the possibilities and optimize the cloud’s potential for simplicity and scalable computing power for our clients. But we do it in a way that sidesteps the cloud’s “not so silver lining” of documented concerns around security, privacy, downtime, data loss and latency issues.

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) defines cloud computing at great length; but essentially we’re talking about a model for enabling convenient, on-demand network access to a shared pool of configurable computing resources in a way that involves minimal management effort or service provider interaction and things like rapid scalability, elasticity of resources and on-demand self-service.

A solution provider’s ability to get this mix right is critical for any company that relies on fast, clear, accurate, affordable and secure data analytics for competitive advantage. Teradata’s approach involves a range of both public, private and hybrid cloud deployment models that can be customized to suit a client’s needs. For a detailed overview of our own array of cloud computing solutions, take a look at a white paper from Enterprise Management Associates, or a Teradata Magazine article penned last year by Paul Barsch. For the purposes of this article, I’ll illustrate our approach to both the public and private cloud through a couple of use cases.

A Public Cloud Solution for BevMo!

A few years ago, while some vendors and industry watchers were still talking about cloud computing in the future tense, Teradata was already deploying proven cloud solutions for customers. Take for instance, what we’re doing with BevMo!, a west coast retailer of wine, spirits and gourmet foods. Our Teradata Cloud Services quickly provided BevMo! with an integrated and managed data warehousing environment. By accessing Teradata hardware, software, managed services and customer services in the cloud, BevMo! was able to get flexible, secure and scalable data analytics on a subscription basis. The ability to forego big capital expenditures in favor of monthly operational costs was beneficial to cash flows as BevMo’s Vice President of Information Technology Bob Graham explained in a webinar with Teradata.

Getting to analytics deployment faster is one key advantage of cloud computing. Bob Graham concurs, “Within one week, [Teradata] had a proof of concept up and running. That was pretty exciting, and it opened some eyes about what was possible.” The Teradata-BevMo! solution brought clarity to customer and transaction detail, followed by a focus on master data management that Bob Graham says “really opened up the world on how the business actually operates.” BevMo! is leveraging Teradata Cloud Services for competitive advantage with advanced analytic capabilities on things like SKU and vendor data management, business and regulatory compliance, invoice error reduction and sophisticated pricing analytics that involve product, cost, location and other variables.

Meredith and the Teradata ADW Private Cloud

Meanwhile, media and marketing giant Meredith recently turned to Teradata for a powerful private cloud solution to get the most from its sizable data assets. Through traditional and new media channels around brands like Better Homes and Gardens, Parents and Ladies Home Journal, Meredith had developed information on over 100 million women and as many as 3,000 data points drawn from surveys, location information and other sources. The company also relies heavily on list rental. We built a private cloud solution around Teradata Active Enterprise Data Warehouse for Meredith to reap faster, more accurate data analyses for immediate and relevant messaging to consumers in near real time.

This has helped the company improve reach and reduce loss among its subscriber base. Meredith can now run 600 campaigns a month instead of 300, and the company has slashed segment analysis time from 24 hours to less than one hour. Meredith also takes advantage of Teradata’s professional services to help with common tasks, which frees up their DBA’s to do more complex activities.

Meredith chose a private cloud solution with Teradata for a number of reasons. Chief among these reasons is Teradata’s unique ability to provide elastic performance on demand in a private cloud environment. Meredith’s business necessarily involves spikes in usage, especially during certain seasons where customers and prospects go online for promotions. The Teradata ADW Private Cloud offers extra data warehousing performance when Meredith needs it, on a pay-per-use basis.

As I mentioned, the nuances of cloud computing infrastructure are not something the enterprise client should be expected to master; that’s the job of Teradata and other technology and service providers. But this measure of trust makes our role that much more important. We are not the first or largest provider of cloud related services, but our ability to make the right decisions over the years has positioned us to manage our clients’ data responsibly whether in a private or public cloud environment, and in a way that is profitable for them.
(continued from page 3)  **Capitalizing on the Cloud, cont.**

An optimal time to move to the cloud is when you are planning a major transition, such as replacing your ERP solution. If new licenses must be purchased for the company, cloud solutions should be evaluated. If you have aging PCs and servers and are considering an upgrade, that is a great time to look at IaaS solutions. Finally, if you are performing a merger or acquisition and must purchase additional perpetual licenses or move employees to a new system, the cloud frequently makes financial and operational sense.

**Conclusion**

Migrating to the cloud presents a host of potential benefits for manufacturers and distributors including cost savings, increased collaboration and reductions in IT staff and infrastructure. The per-use cost model of the cloud and remote storage and maintenance allow organizations to reallocate funding and resources to other integral functions of the business, rather than IT. However, companies must know when to act to obtain maximum financial benefits and must understand available (and proven) cloud options to implement the right solution.

For further information, please contact Jim Klimkowski, Regional Leader Great Lakes – Technology Consulting, McGladrey LLP and Dean Evans, Infrastructure Practice Leader - Technology Consulting, McGladrey LLP.
Have you heard of the phrase, Big Data? The New York Times declared 2012 the dawn of the “Age of Big Data.” Today, Big Data, together with social and mobile, are the hottest trends in the technology and business communities. “Big Data” is no longer just a technical term, but rather indicates business opportunity. The Data Warehousing Institute (TDWI) Best Practices Report on Big Data Analytics reports that 74% of organizations have adopted some form of analytics today and 34% companies practice some form of advanced Big Data analytics. However, Big Data brings along challenges with benefits. The purpose of this article is to introduce Big Data for our business and education communities and, hopefully, to encourage a lot more discussions on this topic.

What is Big Data?

According to the National Science Foundation (NSF), the phrase Big Data refers to large, diverse, complex, longitudinal, and/or distributed data sets. These data sets are generated from instruments, sensors, Internet transactions, email, video, click streams, and all other digital sources available today and in the future.

To illustrate the picture of Big Data, IDC (the International Data Corporation) did a study called the “Digital Universe.” The study found out that in 2011, the world created 1.8 zettabytes of data, or 2 billion terabytes of data. If we load this amount of data to iPads (32GB) and put up all the iPads, we would create a wall of iPads extending from Alaska to Florida (4,005 miles long and 61-foot high). And this is just the data for 2011, one year, in our modern society. According to IBM, by 2020, the world will store 35 zettabytes of data, 20 times the data created in 2011.

Big Data does not just refer to the volume. Big Data also spans in other dimensions such as variety (many different formats) and velocity (fast growing speed). For instance, Wal-Mart has over 6000 stores worldwide. It handles more than 1 million customer transactions every hour. These are transactional data, like the list on our receipts. How about unstructured data? Facebook processes 2.5 billion pieces of content daily and that includes photos, videos, and other non-text information. Similarly, Twitter generates 12 terabyte of data every day, about 5000 tweets per second. On the website of YouTube, it says “72 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube every minute,” doubling the number from the year before. In 2011, YouTube had more than 1 trillion views. If we spread this out to all the Internet users on earth, that is 441 views for every one of us. “Did you watch 441 YouTube videos last year?”

In a nutshell, Big Data refers to large volume and complex data. As explained by Teradata, if business intelligence is about transaction, Big Data is about interaction. It is much more detailed and complicated, measuring every single bit of our lives.

Why Should We Care about Big Data?

We often hear people say that they have way too much data yet too few techniques that can make sense of it. The word “Big” is relative in nature. It indicates a proportion. To many of us today, the explosion of the complex digital information has outgrown our knowledge and comprehension. And this is where both opportunities and challenges reside. How do we analyze 1 million transactions every hour and make real-time decisions? How can we monitor social media exchange about our product and service and identify an issue as soon as it’s being discussed among our customers? Businesses want to achieve performance optimization. How exactly can we turn big data into deeper analytics and quicker insights?

In the book titled Taming The Big Data Tidal Wave by Bill Franks, it says “[T]he reality is that we are in a transformative era in

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terms of analytic capabilities and the leveraging of massive amounts of data. Big data is the next wave of new data sources that will drive the next wave of analytic innovation in business, government, and academia. “On the one hand, “big data” represents some ultimate business opportunity. Economists now call Big Data the new class of economic and corporate asset, like currency or gold.” According to the Economist magazine, the data analytics industry is worth more than $100 billion. But, the challenge is that many of us are still just learning and starting to analyze the abundant and complex data. We are still in the early days for big data. We cannot yet answer these questions very well such as:

- How to create a new business model based on big data?
- How would your business change if you used big data for widespread, real-time customization?
- How can big data augment or even replace management?

**Emerging Trends in Big Data Research**

Today, scholars and experts are conducting some very exciting new research with “Big Data”, for instance, Sentiment Analysis, or opinion mining. In another word: listen to the Web! Such application goes through website content and uses Natural Language Processing techniques to analyze what people say and their attitude and even emotion about certain things. For example, Kraft Foods monitors the web to learn what percentage of comments about a barbecue sauce is positive or negative so they can improve their products. Sentiment analysis is now used to monitor customer feedback, user comments, and trends of discussions on the web and in social media. The true beauty is that based on a large amount of data, sentiment analysis may help you to predict certain things such as the American Idol votes or the next president.

Of course, “Big Data” analytics don’t just watch web data. New technologies have emerged to address complex structured data, such as RFID sensor and Global Positioning System (GPS) data. For instance, Telemetry Analytics are now used for gaming data, to collect and mine the data in real-time as data arrives from the gaming device such as movements and press of buttons so companies can design more engaging and interactive games. Insurance companies already use devices (Snapshot or Drive Wise) to track our driving behavior. There are 250 million vehicles on the road in the US. If on average, each car runs 10,000 miles per year. The analytics can be dealing with mountains of data.

**Big Data Coming to the Classrooms**

In my recent years of teaching, I have received more and more inquiries about courses and training on data analytics. Students ask when and where they can learn more about data analytics and “Big Data”. Beyond such discussion is the need for a new type of professional who can work on business data using technical applications, modeling, statistics, analytics and math. Some people call them the Data Scientists, which didn’t quite exist five years ago but now is one of the hottest that companies fight to recruit. Harvard Business Review even call data scientist the “sexiest” job of the 21st century.

Today, universities are offering degree programs and training on data analytics and related topics. At our Raj Soin College of Business, we have analytics courses offered in the **Master of Information Systems programs** as well as in our undergraduate MIS program. By the way, our Master of Information Program is recruiting now for the Fall 2013 cohort (busines.wright.edu and select Graduate Students then Information Systems). Our students learn to use applications and tools from Teradata, MicroStrategy, Tableau, IBM, etc. to analyze real life business data in case studies. The road to Data Scientists may be long but we will continue to provide the most current education to our students and to explore new opportunities for improvement.

Data Analytics will be one of the most needed domains in business in the near future. Not only is there a high-demand in the market, but more importantly, there are also burning needs for educating our students and conducting research in this area. Business practices and academia bear the joint responsibility to train our future leaders to gain the knowledge and skills in data analytics. I look forward to such collaboration.
Many people today find using social media in their marketing mix to be a daunting, time-consuming process. With all the different social media networks available, it is no wonder why some people have this opinion, but using the right tools for the job can dramatically reduce your social media workload, leaving you free to focus your energy as you choose. While many of the following services are compatible with multiple social media channels, unless you are only focusing on “The Big Three” i.e., Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, none will satisfy your every social media marketing need (for free), so it is necessary to set up multiple social media marketing management tools and create a personalized workflow that suites your tastes, budget and objectives.

Aggregators

These tools help you save time by allowing you to easily collect, save, and review content from across the web from a single page to help you curate articles for your social media posts.

1. **Netvibes** – (Free Web Service) is a content aggregator that pulls articles from across the internet. It can be compared to viewing stripped down content from multiple sites, all at once or a robust RSS feed reader. It also searches multiple social sites for conversations happening in real time.

2. **Read It Later/Pocket** – (Free Web Service, Kindle, iOS, Windows Mobile, BlackBerry, and Android Apps) This service allows you to save content from across multiple platforms such as websites, mobile apps and devices, and cleans them up into a more readable format that can be read offline. It can also be interconnected with many other web services to streamline your social media efforts.

3. **Readability** – (Free Web Service, iOS and Android Apps) is very similar to Pocket with a different user interface.

Scheduling Tools

I am not referring to your personal calendar here, rather, these tools allow you to schedule the distribution of your content to different social media channels from one easy to use service. Saving you the time that it would take to post on each channel leaves you free to focus on actually fostering conversation with your followers or groups to which you belong.

4. **Hootsuite** – (Free Web Service or $9.99/month, iOS and Android apps) is a Social Media Service that provides analytics, monitoring, and scheduling capabilities for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Google+ pages. You can post to individual social networks, monitor your profiles on the networks listed above, and view free monthly analytics reports on your social activity and engagement.

5. **Buffer** – (Free or $9.99/month) is a service that automatically times your posts for the best impact.

Automation

These services allow you to set up specific responses to certain events or actions that can be used in conjunction with some of the other tools outlined in this article to maximize your social media marketing efforts. They can even be pretty handy for personal use.

6. **Twitter Feed** – (Free Web Service) is a service that enables automatic posts to Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn via an RSS feed. Additional features include filtering posts by keywords, adjusting the time period between posts, adding your own text before and after the automatically generated message. However, one major drawback to this service is that the maximum time delay between posts is 24 hours, so if you want to pipe highly specific content from multiple RSS feeds to a Facebook Page, this may not fit the bill. On the other hand it is a great service for pushing your own blog posts to these social media networks, and it works wonders for populating a twitter account with a base amount of content. Simply plug in your feeds, select the social media network, and watch the posts flow.

7. **IFTTT** – (Free Web Service) an acronym for “If This Then That”, ifttt.com allows multiple online services to be interconnected. Use it as a supplement to Hootsuite, as it provides interconnectivity between more social networks and other services as well as more robust content customization. There are “channels” which are the different networks and services they connect and “recipes” which define how the “channels” interact with one another. Use this carefully because it is possible to create infinitely repeating loops of automation, such as setting up a “recipe” to post your Facebook
activity to LinkedIn and another to post your LinkedIn activity to Facebook will result in a never ending cascade of repeating posts.

**Influence Tools**

If the objective of social media marketing is to influence online behavior, then these influence tools can be one metric in determining the relative success of your social media efforts. They typically measure influence through such variables as engagement with content (likes, shares, retweet, +1s, etc.) as well as total and new followers, and audience size across multiple social media channels.

8. **Klout** - (Free web service, iOS and Android Apps) branded as “The Standard for Influence” is a web service that measures influence and engagement across multiple social media networks and provides insights into your most successful posts, as well as your relative influence compared to other people across the web.

9. **Kred** - (Free Web Service) is very similar to Klout, with a different influence scale and user interface.

**Data Analysis Tools**

These tools are some of the most helpful in understanding successful content performance, and provide models for figuring out when to post, on what social network to post and identifies how your social media efforts are performing over time.

10. **Twitter Counter** - (Free Web Service) counts and forecasts the number of tweets, followers and the following for any twitter user and displays the results in interactive graphs.

11. **Followerwonk.com** - (Free Web Service) a Twitter utility that analyzes a wide variety of metrics such as location, recency of follower/following activity, gender, age of accounts, follower/following count and much more.

12. **Xefer.com** - (Free Web Service) this Twitter utility provides data visualization for analyzing the time of day and day of the week that your Twitter posts get the most engagement.

13. **Facebook Insights for Pages** - (Free for Facebook Pages) this is one the most robust out-of-the-box analytic tools for a social media service. Your Facebook page must have at least 30 “Page Likes” to get access to the data, which includes Likes, Shares, link clicks, reach, engagement, etc., and even allows .csv exports of your page data for customized data analysis through Microsoft Excel or Apple Numbers.

**Content Sourcing**

Let’s face it, figuring out the most appropriate and ethical way of sourcing content for social media posts can be challenging. There are various copyright restrictions for using others’ content, but this new medium has blurred the line on this issue. These services provide clear and concise information on exactly what and how content can be used or reused, applicable copyright information, required attribution, etc.

14. **Search.creativecommons.com** - (Free Web Service) this search engine has an advanced search option for commercial use to reuse media across multiple exterior sites such as Google Images, Flickr, Wikimedia commons, and many more. It is useful in creating custom content without using stock photos for blogs or social media.

15. **TheNounProject.com** - (Free - $3) this site does require a descent understanding of design software, but can be incredibly useful for content creation. The Noun Project provides a hosting and distribution service for artists who design minimalistic vector drawings for your use, some of which are in the public domain (such as government designed map, weather, and navigational icons) and are free to use without attribution, and other more complex and refined drawings that can be used under a creativecommons license with attribution or can be purchased for a modest fee of a few dollars per design. There are thousands of designs depicting everything from a partially sunny day, to a cheeseburger, to radiation warnings.

I hope you find these services a useful and time saving addition to your social media marketing efforts. Now, get out there, spread information, and have some conversations.

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As we begin looking at how to migrate to SharePoint 2013, it is time to share some of the lessons learned. The example below is just one idea that worked for me. Guiding you through a full adoption process will take too long to show you everything in a pure step-by-step fashion so I had to omit some steps to save time. Do not fret, to make up, I will provide some great ideas to help get your creative juices flowing for your next SharePoint migration.

So how do you try something new? You first need to understand it, use it, and test it. This is why I setup a test site I like to call The Playground. I use playground for two reasons. First, I do not want developers thinking it was a sandbox because it is not. Second, business users seem to understand playground as somewhere they can go to “play” without fear of breaking anything and this is exactly what I encourage the users to do; “play!” I challenge the users to try new things and try to “break” the application. I also tell them I have a script to repair anything if something should break. With this script I can fix the site in less than five minutes so do not worry about anything. In a year and a half only one person has broken the site and I honestly do not know what they did.

Over the years I have heard users say “I don’t know what SharePoint can do, I don’t want to break it. So I just don’t do anything.” But if they do not try new things they will never learn, and if they never learn they will never adopt the technology. We have to remove the fear barrier. How do we do that?

We give the user a playground where all the features and functionality are turned on (so they do not have to ask). We add links to Microsoft Office training site; we edit the home page to show the calendar and a video on the right side instead of the logo. In the calendar we add a reoccurring event showing the user when the site will be refreshed. Speaking of refreshing the site, we also put in details at the top of the default page explaining data should just be test data and not production data due to the potential for data loss. The script I mentioned earlier to fix the site is run every two weeks to refresh the environment so I do not have to worry about the user cleaning anything up; yeah, no work, thank you automation.

Below I will walk through the steps I used and show you the scripts I am using to recover from disaster. Quick note, make sure you are running the scripts on an account that has farm level admin rights. I would be remiss to say I did every single step of this myself. It has been an ongoing journey where I have to thank Tony Madden and Aseem Saxena.

It is fairly plain and simple to get your test site up and running. You have two farms right? One is for production and one for non-production. You start in your non-production environment and then duplicate everything in your production environment.

**In the non-production environment complete the following steps:**

1. Make a new web app called ‘nonprod-playground.yourdomain.local’
2. Add this new entry to DNS
3. Create the root site collection site as a ‘team site’
4. Add the user account NT AUTHORITY\Authenticated Users to the owners group (don’t be surprised if you have to manually type it in)
5. Setup the main page
   a. Add some links to Microsoft Office Help, add a video link to something like this video http://content3.catalog.video.msn.com/e2/ds/bb1c3fbe-18e8-41a4-b4b2-eb0ef9145cdd.wmv (embed it so that the users just have to click. (don’t ask how, learn something on your own)
   b. Add your governance plan to the document library (I know you all have one).
   c. Also add sample excel files and a basic list, maybe add a look up list so you can highlight the out of the box power that SP has. I have an example of the Excel REST services pulling chart data from an excel file.
   d. I even have a BLOG that I post things to if users want to learn more (Make sure you publish to non prod and prod or on the next refresh it will be gone.)
6. Save the backup script below to c:\scripts\backup-playground.ps1
7. Run the backup script to make the initial copy of the site

**Backup script:**

```powershell
#Checks to see if the Microsoft SharePoint PowerShell commandlets are loaded.
If (-not(Get-PSSnapin | Where-Object {$_._Name -eq "Microsoft.SharePoint.PowerShell")}}) {Add-PSSnapin Microsoft.SharePoint.PowerShell;}

#backup the playground site
Backup-SPSite -Identity http://nonprod-playground.yourdomain.local -Path "C:\nonprod-playground.bak" -Force
```

**In the production environments:**

1. Make a new web app called ‘playground.yourdomain.local’
2. Add this new entry to DNS
3. Create the root site collection site as a ‘team site’
4. Add the user account NT AUTHORITY\Authenticated Users to the owners group (don’t be surprised if you have to manually type it in)
5. Save the restore script below to c:\scripts\Restore-playground.ps1
6. Restore the site from the backup you created in step #7 above to the new site by running the restore script.

**Restore Script:**

```powershell
#Checks to see if the Microsoft SharePoint PowerShell commandlets are loaded.
If (-not(Get-PSSnapin | Where-Object {$_._Name -eq "Microsoft.SharePoint.PowerShell")}}) {Add-PSSnapin Microsoft.SharePoint.PowerShell;}
```

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Crown Launches New SeeWhy-Crown hybris Connector at Internet Retailer

Application Increases ROI for hybris Clients by Capturing Abandon Carts

Crown, a full service eBusiness firm, today announces a SeeWhy-Crown hybrisConnector™ available online at the hybris Extend integration marketplace and demonstrated this week at the Internet Retailer Conference & Expo (IRCE).

The app integrates hybris, the world’s fastest growing commerce platform with SeeWhy, the market leader in real time eCommerce shopping cart recovery.

Crown will demo the integration during IRCE at the hybris booth, 1509, June 4-7th.

Crown’s certified hybris developers built the app to integrate with SeeWhy, a Boston-based company, offering the industry’s only real time shopping cart recovery solution. SeeWhy’s Conversion Manager converts up to 50% of abandoned carts and delivers the highest ROI in ecommerce today.

“We are excited to work with Crown and found their technical expertise second to none,” said Scott G. Silk, CEO and President of SeeWhy. “The SeeWhy-Crown hybris Connector brings a high value capability to the hybris ecosystem of market leading ecommerce solutions.”

To learn more about the SeeWhy-Crown hybris Connector, visit the hybris Extend online integration marketplace or the hybris booth, 1509 at IRCE.

About SeeWhy, Inc.: SeeWhy is the market leader in real time eCommerce shopping cart recovery. Over 4,000 of today’s leading brands/retailers choose SeeWhy’s products to rapidly improve conversion rates and deliver the highest ROI in ecommerce today. SeeWhy is the only company that analyzes consumer buying behavior in real-time across multiple channels, automatically triggering the right marketing message at the right time.

About Crown: Crown is a full service eBusiness firm that helps growth-oriented clients attract, acquire and retain customers digitally. Crown partners with Adobe, hybris and ExactTarget to enable the digital experiences and interactions that drive content, commerce, communications and analytics.

Since 2001, Crown has made a difference in creating eCommerce and web experiences with technology, digital marketing, and analytics consulting. Crown’s award-winning work has increased profitability for clients in diverse industries including Fidelity, Wyndham Vacation Ownership, General Motors, and many others.

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“The Playground”, cont.

# backup the playground site
Restore-SPSite http://playground.yourdomain.local -Path \\NonProdServer\C$\non-prod-playground.bak -Force -Confirm:$False

Now that you have the basic site up and running and he scripts are saved, the only thing left is to setup the scheduled tasks to automatically run the scripts at the right time. I have the backup start at 11:00 PM every other Saturday and have the restore script run at 2:00 AM every other Sunday.

BIO: Randy Hinders lives in Dayton, Ohio where he was born and raised. Hinders is an Airborne veteran of the US Army with over eight years of service where he progressed to the rank of SGT. With military training in Satellite and Microwave Communications he reclassified to Military Police. While serving as a Desk SGT in Germany he started his path towards MCSE certification in 1997 and working with the computer network and NT 3.51. Upon his Honorable Discharge he started focusing on IIS and Email Servers. He has done a few stints at smaller Managed Service Providers focusing on small to medium businesses IT services. He has worked with every version of SharePoint Server off and on since it was Front Page Server Extensions and was the author of ADS4NT web based application provisioning IIS 4/6 web sites for ISP’s. He is currently focusing on business process automation for an environment of over 1300 users.
Not All Clouds Are Created Equal

By: Alex Rodriguez, Vice President, Systems Engineering, Expedient Communications

Six Critical Assurances You Need

1. How Does the Cloud Service Provider Assure a Properly Built, Enterprise Grade Cloud Environment?

Just because a vendor’s marketing department calls their service a “cloud”; doesn’t mean that their technology platforms and architecture design actually live up to industry best practices and standards for cloud computing. Guarantees provided by a Service Level Agreement (SLA) can be misleading, incomplete or may not contain adequate loss compensation in the event of a service outage. In addition to a detailed, quality SLA, you need assurances that your cloud service vendor is using a true enterprise grade computing environment.

Ask some pointed questions. Are their data centers redundant and SSAE-16 audited? This standard, adopted in 2010, refers to a data facility’s suitability for hosting and managing highly secure data for financial institutions. Replacing a 20-year-old standard called SAS-70, SSAE-16 compliance should be considered an absolute necessity in your cloud choices. If the best that your vendor can offer is SAS-70, you may not be receiving current industry standard data security.

Not all cloud providers are created equal. The danger can be in the details.

Are they compliant with and committed to open standards? Many cloud solution providers build their services around monetizing proprietary architectures, making it easy for you to import your data but significantly more difficult to move it later if necessary to a different provider. Open standards mean transparency and interoperability: choose a vendor with a solid commitment to avoiding proprietary lock-in scenarios.

Is your cloud service provider lowering a shroud of mystery around their own hardware choices? Ask some pointed questions about their infrastructure up front. Expedient’s cloud data centers are designed using the latest Intel® Xeon® processors, ultra high speed storage and are deployed on a 10 gigabit Ethernet backbone. Is your prospective vendor willing to provide full disclosure, in detail, about the equipment that they are asking you to trust?

Insist on taking a tour of the facility, personally examining their operations, equipment and security controls before taking the plunge.

How are the facilities themselves protected and maintained? Are there multiple backup power generators? Are the facilities fully staffed? Do they have cooling systems adequate for reliably maintaining the data center at peak load conditions? Do they adhere to industry best practices in providing physical security measures against unauthorized access? These are all important issues that can easily hide between the lines of a vaguely written SLA.

2. How Does The Vendor Measure Performance in the Cloud?

Leveraging cloud computing innovations and fully realizing a predictable, attractive ROI requires the detailed ability to track your cloud service provider’s performance in real time. Most vendors offer SLAs that promise 99.999% uptime and low I/O latency. Serious enterprise IT planners should look beyond these basic statistics and insist upon a performance picture that tells the whole story.

First, conduct a full assessment of your own environment, and accurately identify the applications that would most benefit from migration into cloud hosting. Many larger, mission critical applications simply require significantly more CPU and memory performance capacity than a public-only cloud provider can offer. Many simpler applications with less demanding security requirements, however, can deliver powerful ROI in a cloud environment. A critical first step to gauging your performance needs is to distinguish your resource-intensive data processes, and to determine how much performance your business truly needs.

Next, ask the prospective cloud provider detail about their monitoring solutions and how much of those metrics you have direct access to. At minimum, you should have the ability to monitor network capacity (Mbps), memory capacity (GB), storage capacity (GB), disk I/O (IOPS) and CPU utilization in real time. How easily can you access these performance statistics? Request a demonstration to review the administrative user interface and to ensure that you can quickly and accurately verify performance benchmarking when you need it.

Determine how your vendor addresses the issue of resource-intensive “noisy neighbor” clients that may share a cloud server with your applications. What steps does the cloud solutions provider take to ensure performance consistency when a nearby client reaches peak load conditions? Does their SLA address this issue, and if so, how?

If you have the time; run a sample workload on the final two vendors platform against a benchmarking tool like Passmark to determine actual performance. Just because the quantity of resources you are buying may be the same amount, the performance you get will be determined by the underlying hardware.

Finally, contrast your performance needs and metrics availability with the promises being made in your prospective vendor’s SLA. Many cloud providers will guarantee a nearly 100% uptime, while assigning only very minimal penalties should they fail to live up to those standards. Examine the SLA closely to make sure that, in the event of an outage, your organization will be adequately compensated for any potential service loss.

3. How Does the Provider Assure Optimal Interoperability Between Your Virtual And Physical Platforms?

Not every application or platform is best hosted on a cloud platform or in a virtualized environment. Applications with very high security or performance demands, or requiring significant amounts of computing resources, may not be suitable or cost effective in a fully cloud-based production infrastructure.

For this reason, your cloud vendor should be able to provide physical colocation and private cloud services that can easily interoperate with the applications that you can easily and quickly migrate to public cloud hosting.

Start by taking a good look at your data utilization model. Applications that require large amounts of CPU and memory resources for brief times – the burstable data model – but moderate security could benefit from a public cloud service that measures billable bandwidth usage based on peak conditions.

For applications that have static or consistently growing data processing requirements, relying on a burstable public cloud service can become extraordinarily expensive.

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In these scenarios, a private or hybrid cloud service offers better rates for more consistent utilization, in addition to much higher levels of reliability and security. Private and hybrid cloud deployments also deliver significantly more options for regulatory compliance auditing.

Ask the cloud solutions vendor how easily you will be able to intermix your physical and virtual cloud computing platforms. Are their cloud and physical colocation facilities near each other, interconnected by reliably high bandwidth? Will your larger, privately deployed applications be able to very quickly communicate with those in public or hybrid cloud hosting? How flexible will your provider be, as you work to best balance your hosting resources for maximum ROI and optimal performance?

4. How Does the Cloud Service Provider Assure Security and Compliance?

In the world of HIPAA, SOX, PCI and other major regulatory standards, enterprises today must take the greatest care in safeguarding private and proprietary information from loss or compromise. As cloud service providers effectively become extensions of a company’s IT department, it is not enough for a vendor to simply claim compliance. Many cloud providers may overstate their ability to stand up to regulatory scrutiny: what assurances can your vendor give that they in fact can effectively serve more security-oriented enterprises?

Address the issue of compliance auditing early in the vendor selection process. Will your own compliance auditors have the ability to conduct annual or semiannual reviews of the vendor’s procedures to ensure complete adherence to your data control policies? Does the vendor have a team in place to cooperate fully with audits, who understand everything about the technology, processes and relationships that make up your cloud environment? Is there a robust procedure in place to quickly address and remedy any compliance issues?

Insist on a quality control process for your data storage. Are there measures in place to automatically verify the integrity of hypervisor and data volumes? How much of that information is available for review in real time by your IT staff?

Finally, ask about compliance and security measures implemented directly into the platform, at the hardware level. Does the cloud solutions vendor use server platforms based on Intel® Xeon® processors that factor hardware-based AES-NI strong encryption protocols into computing transactions?

Frequently recommended as the best way today to ensure the security of business-critical data, strong AES-based encryption is an essential component of any solution meant to protect network traffic, personal data and IT infrastructures. By accelerating AES encryption at the hardware level, servers incorporating Intel® AES-NI encryption features apply this security on each transaction, at record speeds and with exceptional reliability - ensuring data protection far more effectively than software-based encryption systems.

Another technology that you should look for in a cloud provider is Intel’s® Trusted Execution Technology (Intel® TXT) which provides hardware-based security technologies to build a solid foundation for security. Built into Intel’s silicon, these technologies address the increasing and evolving security threats across physical and virtual infrastructure by complementing runtime protections such as antivirus software. Intel TXT also can play a role in meeting government and industry regulations and data protection standards by providing a hardware-based method of verification useful in compliance efforts.

Intel TXT is specifically designed to harden platforms from the emerging threats of hypervisor attacks, BIOS, or other firmware attacks, malicious root kit installations, or other software-based attacks which could be more impactful to an entire environment as compared to an attack directed toward a specific server’s operation system.

It is critical that your own auditors trust your cloud provider, and that the two teams can seamlessly work together to ensure compliance. Don’t settle for a vague claim of compliance - ask the questions that bring the most critical issues into focus.

5. How Does the Cloud Vendor Assure Timely And Quality Support?

Even the best cloud service provider experiences the unavoidable hiccup from time to time, in scenarios ranging from simple hardware failures to major natural disasters. Before you trust a vendor - or any third party data center or colocation service provider, for that matter - with your most critical and important data, make sure that you have a very clear picture of how this vendor prepares for and deals with disaster recovery and support scenarios.

Your cloud service vendor should have multiple available data centers, strategically positioned in varying geographical locations to offer redundant failover. If the vendor’s East Coast data center weathers a major hurricane or snow storm, can they quickly switch service to a facility hundreds or thousands of miles away without customer facing interruption? Are their cloud environments themselves highly compartmentalized, to prevent a significant failure from impacting other operating environments? How can they assure reliable service even in the event of major failure or disruptions?

Next, understand the level of customer support that you can expect from your vendor. Many cloud providers today offer little more than a set of APIs and very basic support services. Most enterprises require and expect a more comprehensive level of support than an automated system can provide.

Ask if your cloud vendor will assign a dedicated human being to answer the phone when you call for help. Will this support staff offer the skills and knowledge necessary to quickly solve problems relate to your specific applications and platforms?

6. How Does the Cloud Vendor Assure That They Will Be A True Partner For Your Business?

To achieve the best results and ROI on a cloud computing initiative, you should see a potential relationship with a cloud service provider as a long term partnership investment. Make sure that you can buy resources in the increments that you require and that you are not forced into pre-defined bundles. Your vendor should be willing to take the time and effort to understand your needs, help identify opportunities, discover potential problems long before they happen, and work hand-in-hand with your organization to ensure long term security and compliance.

Look for transparency and clear, direct answers to your detailed questions. Examine their SLA carefully to ensure that significant liabilities aren’t hiding within the ambiguities of vague language and thin promises. Tour the vendor’s facilities, meet with their personnel and take the steps necessary to comfortably consider them an extension of your own IT team.

Finally, choose a vendor with the industry partnerships necessary to clearly foresee trends in the cloud services industry, and to offer qualified insights into the challenges that real world customers face in cloud environments. Industry partnerships with cloud technology leaders can also help assure that when you need a new solution or strategy, your vendor can draw on a deep well of expertise to provide it.
INVEST IN A TRUE PARTNER

Your vendor should be willing to take the time and effort to understand your needs, help identify opportunities, discover potential problems long before they happen, and work hand-in-hand with your organization to ensure long term security and compliance.

- Look for transparency and clear, direct answers to your detailed questions
- Examine their SLA
- Tour the vendor’s facilities, meet with their personnel and take the steps necessary to comfortably consider them an extension of your own IT team
- Foresee trends in the cloud services industry, offer qualified insights into the challenges that real world customers face in cloud environments

NEW JOB POSTINGS

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For more information about these jobs and other jobs, please visit http://www.technologyfirst.org/component/employment_exchange

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Alex Rodriguez is the Vice President of System Engineering and Product Development for Expedient Communications, a US-based technology services company providing telecommunication, data center and managed hosting services to Fortune 500 and smaller organizations across the medical, manufacturing, high technology, education and government verticals. Expedient Communications operates data centers across the United States as well as an award winning, all-Ethernet national telecommunications network.

Alex directs the architecture and platform teams at Expedient Communications, developing services like the Virtual Instance and Virtual Colocation cloud services.

Alex brings with him over 15 years of data center, information technology and telecommunications experience. Previously, Alex held several leadership positions in large scale Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and Competitive Local Exchange Carrier (CLECs) in the Boston, Massachusetts and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania metropolitan regions.

Alex maintains significant relationships with industry leaders and is a regular speaker at events such as the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology CIO forum.

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