Cloud Computing

Cloud Database Services—A Roadmap for Successful Cloud Data Migration Overview

Three Reasons to Consider Cloud-based Disaster Recovery Now
Leadership Awards Call for Nominees

By: Ann Gallaher, COO, Technology First

Technology First will hold its third Leadership Awards dinner on May 5, 2016 at the University of Dayton Flight Deck. The Technology First Leadership award recognizes the contribution of information technology professionals ensuring a vibrant Dayton community. Recognizing Individuals and Teams exemplifying Technology First Values: creating a community to share knowledge, grow business, and explore the future.

Again we want to recognize emerging technology talent at the college and university level. This year we are looking for student leaders or teams working on senior capstone projects in area businesses. If your company is hosting a UD, WSU, Sinclair or other local college team and think they should be recognized in the community please nominate them!

A new category will be recognizing innovation in the workplace. This could be an internal project lead by the IT department or a customer project lead by an IT services company.

How has your company taken a technological leap to improve your business function?

The 2016 categories include:

Emerging Technology Leader
An IT college student or student team that exhibited excellence while delivering a capstone project.

Outstanding Technology Team
An IT department that has impacted the efficiency, productivity, and performance of their company.

Innovative Technology Team
An IT company or IT department that has designed and implemented an innovative use of technology.

Best IT Services Company
An IT company that has increased its investment in the Dayton region through revenue, jobs, or capacity.

IT Executive of the Year
A senior level professional responsible for influencing progress and developing teams through leadership excellence.

Nominating an individual and team only takes a minute. We just want to know why you think they should be nominated for the award. Please have their contact information ready when you nominate them at www.technologyfirst.org

See you in May!
Data is the key to all business operations and strategic decision making. That translates to data and databases as the most important asset within the IT ecosystem, whether data resides on-premise or in the cloud. As a result, data driven organizations deal with overwhelming challenges today due to rapid and explosive data growth.

These challenges include, but are not limited to, sustaining on-premise enterprise architecture, storage complexities, scalability requirements, application and database technology stacks, data unification, business continuity and high availability, security, and compliance.

These challenges drive the strategic decisions to improve business operations and revenue based on emerging technologies. Today, cloud options are discussed as a viable strategic solution to meet some or all of these challenges. Successful adoption to the cloud requires a roadmap and how-to guideline related to all IT components, especially relating to data and databases.

Cloud Justification

There are various strategic reasons as to why data centric organizations consider deployment of business functions to the cloud. Among the prevalent reasons include rapid data growth, e-commerce/e-business/web service advancements, emerging mobile apps and enterprise application software (EAS) requirements, 24x7 operations and high availability, flexible cost models and other evolving requirements. From a macro level view, overall cost/benefit and business agility justification are often the compelling overall drivers.

Cloud Models

Cloud Service Providers (CSPs) come in all flavors and sizes from the lower tier commodity providers to the high-end enterprise level providers with complex geographically dispersed redundant data centers.

Today’s most common cloud service infrastructures include the acronyms IaaS, PaaS and SaaS. In short, IaaS (Infrastructure-as-a-Service) includes converged physical and virtual infrastructure which is supplied and hosted in secure data centers. PaaS (Platform-as-a-Service) includes IaaS provisions along with the layer for software components including OS, web servers, databases, software development tools and others. SaaS (Software-as-a-Service) includes PaaS provisions and bundles the pre-configured application software with business rules that are adapted to.

Matrixed in with IaaS/PaaS/SaaS are Public, Private and Hybrid models. In short, Public cloud is a virtually configured publicly shared multitenant environment. Private cloud is typically a virtualized single owner and segregated environment. Hybrid refers to multiple delivery and integration models that could include on-premise and various cloud infrastructures.

Organizations will utilize the appropriate public, private and hybrid model or combination of depending on the business requirements. Typically, organizations moving to cloud services implement a hybrid approach.

Cloud Adoption and Data Services

Cloud adoption typically takes an incremental, iterative and multi-stage hybrid approach with most organizations implementing only selected applications, functionalities, data and processes at a time. Most organizations also implement a “proof of concept” project to test out the viability of cloud solutions for their specific business requirement.

As a stakeholder within an organization’s strategic cloud adoption team, the Data Architect/Analyst will participate in the business case analysis and utilize the DBA as needed for additional technical input.

The Data Architect/DBA will take on the primary responsibility of looking at the whole ecosystem surrounding the data and database depending on the selected application(s), functionality, and work-flow being transitioned. Data centric recommendations will contribute greatly to the decision making process and whether to proceed with a cloud based solution.

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Once a clear decision is made to move forward with cloud adoption, the Data Architect/DBA should then be included in developing the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Cloud Service Providers (CSPs). During the RFP development process, the DBA should focus on reviewing and analyzing various CSP components based upon data related provisioning requirements.

Cloud Pre-Deployment —
The Role of the DBA

The DBA should be heavily involved in the cloud pre-deployment planning phase. Typically, the DBA gets involved with such tasks as estimating storage needs, scoping virtual computing usage requirements, evaluating database architectural needs (e.g. high availability), determining backup and recovery, evaluating data archiving requirements and scoping other detailed data related, pre-deployment planning and challenges.

Building out cloud architecture properly can be a challenging endeavor. Improper architectural implementations can cause complications immediately with production issues and outages. So the DBA, Systems Administrator (SA) and other relevant IT personnel should look at all architectural considerations when moving data to the cloud.

Cloud integration services include (1) integrating existing on-premise application and data to the cloud or (2) creating new cloud-based applications and loading existing data from legacy apps or (3) using a hybrid approach with many possible configurations.

The DBA is involved with various aspects of integration services including database creation, testing, quality assurance and other support functions within the provisioning of cloud architectural decisions previously made.

The DBA may also be involved with data unification issues if there is an initiative to consolidate. If necessary, the DBA is involved with pre-migration data cleansing tasks.

Regardless of the methodologies used to deploy to the cloud, the DBA is still an integral part of the integration pre-deployment effort related to data and database specific initiatives.

Cloud Deployment — The Role of the DBA

Once the pre-deployment tasks of planning, architecture and integration services have been completed and approval has been granted to move forward, then the actual cloud deployment involving migration and monitoring setup tasks are started.

Cloud migrations services for the DBA includes migrating existing on-premise production and legacy data for cloud ready use. Risks should have been minimized based on successful pre-deployment tasks.

During the migration phase of cloud deployment, the DBA works with the application development teams and appropriate IT staff (or specialized outsourced providers) regarding the specific migration components and work-flow that touches the data and databases.

The DBA also communicates and coordinates with the CSP deployment team to make sure all of the architectural components decided upon are implemented properly, especially the backup and redundancy configuration.

Production databases are configured and created in the cloud. The DBA initiates and monitors the data transfer tasks based on the appropriate extract and load methodology chosen. Database security standards are checked. Background and batch jobs are established. Appropriate database tuning features are set (although they will likely be tweaked once cloud production has been established for a while). If using a hybrid model, interoperability and all appropriate configurations are checked and tested.

As with on-premise database environments, databases in the cloud should be proactively monitored so the DBA can stay on-top of critical database issues and problems.

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It is very important that the DBA understand what database monitoring requirements are needed for cloud databases. Just as in on-premise, there are many factors that go into the database monitoring decisions in the cloud. These include licensing costs, compatibility issues, feature/function capabilities, portability, interoperability issues and others.

There also tends to be some confusion today about database monitoring in the cloud. The perception that the database is self-sustaining once in the cloud is simply not true. Some CSPs, especially the large public CSPs, provide native monitoring tools. However, in reality these tools have limitations for deep-dive internal database monitoring, metric gathering and the enabling proactive database alerts.

Cloud Post-Deployment — The Role of the DBA

Once databases have been deployed and established in the cloud, just as with on-premise environments, the DBA must manage and administer the databases. However, two fundamental and important questions must be answered in order to understand how the databases in the cloud will be managed and administered.

1. Does the cloud service provider cover DBA support?
   In most cases the CSP does not provide the services to do so. While CSPs work with you to scope infrastructure requirements and help you ramp up, they generally do not provide ‘Database as a Service’ (DaaS) for the pre-deployment and deployment related database functions and tasks.

2. Are there differences for DBA services in the cloud?
   Yes, and the DBA must adapt to those support changes. For instance, physical storage located in the cloud is managed by the CSP. Virtualization is managed in the cloud. Physical backup/recovery is managed by the CSP but there may be limitations (e.g. point-in-time recovery). There are also additional or adapted knowledge, skills, practices and other provisions required for the Cloud DBA.

Once databases reside in the cloud, holistic and optimal database support coverage is necessary as discussed in the white paper “Top 10 Database Essentials — A Catalog of DBA Coverage Necessities”. The Top 10 Database Essentials discusses why breaking down DBA tasks into categorized domains will allow database services to be organized holistically minimizing the potential for any service gaps.

The Roadmap for Successful Cloud Data Migration provides an organization a blueprint for necessary DBA services to run operations efficiently, whether on-premise or in the cloud.

Please visit www.commitdba.com/database-services/cloud-dba.html for more information on Cloud DBA services and to access the full white paper “Cloud Database Services — A Roadmap for Successful Cloud Data Migration”.

Three Reasons to Consider Cloud-based Disaster Recovery Now

IT directors know disaster recovery (DR) is important. They are aware of the costly issues of downtime and the damage disruption can cause to businesses. So why are there so many companies without a solid DR plan already in place?

The reasons vary, but among the most prevalent answers is that many organizations consider the chance of a disaster occurring to be minimal, and the process of developing, implementing and testing a DR plan to be costly and time-consuming. The reality is that disasters can and do happen — whether as a result of a natural disaster or human error. And, DR planning doesn’t have to be time- or cost-prohibitive, especially if you make cloud-based DR part of your overall plan.

Here are three reasons to include a cloud-based DR solution in your DR plan — and a specific cloud-based DR solution to consider.

**Less Hassle. Greater Peace of Mind.**

Unlike traditional DR solutions, a cloud-based DR solution doesn’t require you to build a new physical site or to repair an existing solution. Instead, production systems and data are continuously replicated in the cloud with only minor or no adjustments to your existing environment. There are significant savings right there.

In addition, the location of a disaster becomes immaterial with cloud-based DR because the cloud is everywhere. Even if a disaster covers a large geographic region, most cloud services providers’ data centers — which provide the foundation for their cloud-based DR solutions — are spread out enough to be beyond reach.

You’ll want to seek out a cloud-based DR solution from a cloud services provider who can supply replication bandwidth of 5 Mbps or better. This will ensure that you continue to enjoy optimum computing performance as well as peace of mind. Your cloud services provider will work with you to provision enough cloud resources to replicate, test and fail over your entire production environment, typically within minutes of an identified incident.

**Expertise at Your Service**

Numerous studies and polls have noted lack of skills, time and money as deterrents for many companies when it comes to creating, implementing and testing DR plans. It’s not a reflection on these organizations’ IT staffs. Companies intentionally hire people to help support and grow their businesses rather than to become experts in DR.

Cloud services providers who specialize in DR do have DR experts on staff. If they can’t deliver on that expertise, they won’t stay in business. Their DR specialists are trained in all aspects of DR design, preparation, testing and execution. And, they are available 24/7/365 to run middle-of-the-night failover tests and to efficiently respond to any actual incident.

Look for a cloud services provider who also offers automated site monitoring and traffic redirection of all resources needed to switch to the recovery site during a crisis. The provider should also provide dependable follow-through on all details of the recovery plan, such as DNS updates and system configuration adjustments.

Yet another area where DR expertise comes into play is testing. Designing a test plan, then conducting the tests until they are satisfactory, is not a job for the inexperienced. However, cloud services providers who offer cloud-based DR solutions are well versed in the testing processes and can both collaborate on the test plan and execute the bulk of the testing. The fact that the DR solution is cloud-based makes the test that much more realistic and less intrusive. Your cloud services provider doesn’t have to access your in-house resources, which could be unavailable in an actual disaster.

**Compliance**

It seems that many organizations are increasingly subject to regulations that require DR plans, documentation, incident reporting and even compliance audits. If your organization is among them, only consider cloud services providers who have built their cloud-based recovery solutions on infrastructure that has been assessed for compliance with a number of regulatory requirements and industry standards. While your company is ultimately responsible for meeting its own compliance requirements, you can often leverage many of the technical and security controls built into a cloud services provider’s infrastructure to help ease your burden. Some cloud services providers may also be willing to provide audit assistance and supply necessary documentation.

**The Recovery Cloud Option**

There are numerous cloud-based DR options on the market. The Peak 10 Recovery Cloud is one you should consider for a number of reasons, including the three considerations cited here.

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The Peak 10 Recovery Cloud provides a cost-effective, highly flexible Disaster Recovery as a Service (DRaaS) solution that ensures rapid recovery of mission-critical applications and data. It features continuous data protection (CDP) style replication to minimize data loss should a disaster occur.

Built on leading-edge technologies and combined with Peak 10’s expertise in cloud-based disaster recovery, the Peak 10 Recovery Cloud enables you to take advantage of the reduced costs associated with multi-tenancy while accessing the cloud resources to restore services in the event of an application or entire site failure quickly, securely and regardless of where your production environment is housed.

**Among the benefits:**
- Continuous data protection (CDP) versus scheduled replication happening a few times a day, resulting in less data loss in the event of a failure
- Rapid recovery times and industry-leading RPO/RTO to meet strict business requirements
- Flexibility to fit most virtual environments without requiring re-architecture
- HIPAA and PCI compliant (and Peak 10’s on-staff compliance officer can provide additional compliance expertise and assistance)
- An experienced team of disaster recovery services specialists available 24/7/365 to monitor data replication or to execute testing and actual recovery processes

There’s also the fact that Peak 10 was listed in Gartner’s 2015 Disaster Recovery as a Service (DRaaS) Magic Quadrant, North America, which presents the competitive positioning of service providers in specific high-growth technology markets — in this case, DRaaS. Peak 10 was also the first provider in the Americas to achieve the Cisco Powered Disaster Recovery as a Service (DRaaS) designation under the Cisco® Cloud and Managed Services Advanced Certification. This certification recognizes Peak 10 as a provider with the capability to sell and deliver cloud and managed services for companies needing to accelerate time to market and time to revenue.

If you’ve been holding off on putting a DR plan in place, now is the time to take action. Including a cloud-based DR solution can make it easier on your budget and on your staff — and making that solution the Peak 10 Recovery Cloud can offer you even more benefits.
Out of the Corporation and into the Community! (Part One)

By: Diana Tullio, Standard Register

Necessity breeds invention… I truly believe this is true! It is hard to find great IT talent these days. Jobs are more numerous than the talent that is available. The traditional hiring strategy just doesn't work anymore from my perspective. The characteristics we might have looked for a few years ago are tough to find and even harder to retain. Today, passion, energy, a desire to make a difference, capacity to learn and grow are just as important as years of experience with specific skill sets. That doesn't mean that tenured candidates are out of the question, but the desire to learn and make a difference are certainly attractive traits.

A little over a year ago, we decided to insource a long-standing IT outsource partnership. This included our help desk and IT infrastructure functions. Our mission was to provide higher service levels in a cost-effective way while providing opportunities for local talent.

The Dayton region is a great area to find talent in the new norm for IT recruiting. I was fortunate to be asked to attend a session hosted by the AccelerateIT program team led by Dave Siebert a few years ago. The program is designed to partner with local businesses to increase job opportunities for those pursuing technical careers. I met the director of the internship program at Sinclair Community College, Jessy Jones, at this event, and it was a match made in IT heaven.

Standard Register has been a wonderful partner of Sinclair’s Internship Program. In the summer of 2014, two IT Managers interviewed a group of Computer Information Systems students and offered internship positions to four of them – to our delight, all were converted to full-time employees the following semester! Recently, Standard Register communicated a need for more interns to work on their help desk team. I provided them with a new batch of resumes and three more students began an internship this fall.

— Jessy Jones, Director, Internship Coordinator, Sinclair Community College

One of the original interns from Sinclair, Peter Pilotti, is an example of the new talent we are looking for and inspired by.

Here is Peter’s story:

My career path started in factory work doing hard manual labor. On January 2, 2001 while lifting a coil of aluminum foil destined to be hard drive platters, I went to put the roll on a skid and felt something pop in my back. I was diagnosed with herniated discs, and was told I would never be able to do heavy manual labor ever again. After long contemplation and two years of working on computers on the side and a lot of advice from my loving girlfriend, I decided to go back to school for computer programming. That was the best two years of my life. I continued my education after my first degree and worked. The opportunity arose for me to move to Dayton to be with my girlfriend. I signed up for classes at Sinclair and was in an A+ class when Jessy Jones walked in and told the class there was an internship available at Standard Register.

This sounded like my dream job as I had already done help desk work for Apple. I applied and was lucky to be one of the first people hired for the new TAC (Technical Assistance Center) team. This was the beginning of a great career at Standard Register. I talk to people all over the USA and find some real fine personalities. The TAC team and management are great and I learn something new every day.

The best thing is when a user gets their problem solved and can go on with their job and the user is very appreciative. This gives me a great sense of satisfaction. — Peter Pilotti, Support Analyst, Standard Register, Inc.

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Peter’s story is a great example of fortitude and perseverance. He is a great team member and makes us proud every day.

Our help desk and desk side manager, Phillip Bennett, has embraced the Sinclair internship program and made this a key talent pipeline for his team. Phillip’s leadership has provided a win for our company, the interns, Sinclair, and the community. He has demonstrated the power of creative thinking when it comes to looking for talent in new ways. His partnership with Jessy Jones illustrates thinking outside of the corporation and into the community.

I’ve visited the students a number of times and always receive a warm welcome from Phillip, Diana and the rest of the team — they have been enthusiastic partners every step of the way! It became apparent during those visits that Phillip cares about his employees and is invested in our students’ success, and Diana is supportive of and involved with our students in a way that is rare for C-level leadership. The students hired have provided very positive feedback about the training they’ve received, the work environment, management and their co-workers. It’s a great environment for them to learn and grow in, and we look forward to a continued partnership! — Jessy Jones

Peter is not alone in his amazing journey. Each of the interns we have hired has a great story that can provide encouragement to other students and to potential employers. I plan to highlight many of these stories in future updates on this topic.

All of this is good stuff, but did we accomplish our mission with the insourcing initiative with this talented group of interns (now employees)? Absolutely, and then some. Even with our new team, we have saved a substantial amount for our company. Our service levels have soared as well with first call resolution (FCR) going from 25% of help desk tickets to over 50% consistently month over month. The team handles over 6,000 tickets a month, and we have been able to provide extended hours of coverage. We have implemented “click to chat” with “remote in” functionality that has been a productivity enhancer for all of our employees across the company. Phillip and the team keep improving our processes and our quality of service each month.

For those that have an interest in pursuing a similar path, here is Jessy’s contact info: jessy.jones@sinclair.edu.
One of the most difficult jobs in information technology is that of network security engineers. The demands of the work are incredible. Network security engineers need to be technically gifted to keep up with the breakneck pace of new technologies and vulnerabilities. They must be ready to put their life on hold to go into work at all hours of the night to remediate security incidents. Those incidents could range from code upgrades all the way to security breaches of the network. The most challenging part of their job is protecting the identity and information from security breaches. Effective network security engineers take personal value in ensuring that all users are educated about security risks through suitable network practices and training seminars.

What a Security-Conscious Employee is Always Asking

Users are the biggest security threat to any organization. They don’t mean to be so dangerous, but users are the only component of an organization that we cannot secure and configure ourselves. Network engineers conceptualize user behavior to deliver security standards centered on protecting valuable user information. On top of their technical duties, security experts are also tasked with formulating a plan on how to secure the impossible. Many organizations utilize required security training during orientation and sometimes on an annual or bi-annual basis. I have been on the receiving end of these training programs, and the content has varied from network and email security procedures to physical security and building access. These are valuable subjects for all people to know—not just employees. But how do we make sure that employees can make thinking about security a custom practice?

A fine line exists between being security focused and being a conspiracy theorist. Although, I’ll bet that the conspiracy theorist has a better handle on his Facebook privacy settings than the average user. The security-conscious employee is always asking, “How could someone take advantage of this situation?” The primary objective of security training is to instill security awareness.

Best Intentions Gone Wrong

Let’s say a group of employees receives a spam email asking them to download a particular file or click on a link. Often, an employee’s first response is to use the “reply all” feature to notify others that the file is spam. This behavior leads to multiple “reply all” responses including “stop responding” emails. Quickly, an inbox multiplies from containing one copy of a potential virus to fifty copies. The recommended response is to forward the email as an attachment to the security expert so that the security expert can notify the rest of the company that the spam email had gotten through the filters.

How do we get the security-thought process in the heads of our employees?

So how do we do it? How do we get this security-thought process in the heads of our employees? I’ve mentioned required training, but that will only work on the willing. I have found that the most efficient form of learning is through experience. There are companies that specialize in security audits that evaluate which employees give up information or run a virus on their computer unknowingly. This kind of service can be costly, so it isn’t feasible for every company.

Some companies practice office hijinks to teach security lessons. For example, when employees walk away from their computer without securing it, the employees often discover that their background picture has been changed, or their icons moved. This type of inconvenience is mostly harmless, but security awareness should be a comprehensive, user-centric process that starts with employees onboarding and continues throughout employment.

The most feasible and cost-effective measure is somewhere in the middle, and it includes layering the following methods:

A. Interactive online security training programs: Conduct interactive security training during employee onboarding. Quarterly training programs could be used as knowledge generators and security knowledge assessment tools. The areas that indicate low user scores can be further evaluated during real world exposure audits and newsletters to reaffirm the security guidelines.

B. Exposure to real world experience of security threats: Perform a yearly security assessment audit to identify security risks and provide recommendations.

C. Periodic newsletter highlighting security breaches: Use newsletters as educational reminders to highlight key security vulnerabilities. The newsletter content should be light and interesting enough for someone to take a few minutes to read.

One more thing before I go: Do you remember that Nigerian prince who wants to make you a millionaire if you help him open a bank account with a couple thousand dollars? There is a possibility that he isn’t 100% legit…just sayin’.

Making Security Second Nature

By: Joe Baker, Sr. Network Engineer, AfidenceIT
Agile Development—The Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing but the Truth

By: Mark Shapiro, Segue Technologies

Different development methodologies have their own approaches to tracking project requirements and ensuring the development team produces a desired product for the customer. The path from concept to completion may take different routes per the type of project or the chosen methodology of the team, but regardless, it critical to have some form of requirements as a point of shared understanding and agreement between the team and the customer. This allows the project to not only proceed as desired, but serve as a point of reference for disagreements over the software as it comes to life, a standard by which to test against, and a starting point for any changes in direction that may occur during the project.

Traditional Requirements Approach

In traditional BRUF (Big Requirements Up Front) or Waterfall development, the project team creates a monolithic requirements document, often called a Software Requirements Specification (SRS) or Software Requirements Definition (SRD), before development work begins; and will update that document as change occurs during the rest of the development lifecycle. The requirements document always represents “the Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing But the Truth” for the software system. If the requirements document says something, you can count on it to be true—and if the software doesn’t work as described in the SRS, it’s a bug. If there is a change in what the software needs to do, it’s a change request—which must then be reflected by updating the requirements document by creating or modifying any number of individual requirements.

How Does Agile Account for Requirements?

In Agile development, we use User Stories instead of a monolithic requirements document. User stories represent a request to change the current state of the system, and once “Done,” should be discarded. A user story is considered “Done” when it meets all the criteria the development team has set in their Definition of Done. Typically, “Done” includes some variant of “the user story has been implemented, tested, and accepted by the Product Owner.” If the software doesn’t work as described… well, once a User Story is Done it’s Done, and there’s no such thing as “doesn’t work as described.” Instead, everything is “doesn’t work as desired,” and results in a new User Story reflecting the desired change.

The Agile User Story approach to requirements is all well and good for product-based teams with full ownership of the project, but for service-based teams building software on contract for a customer, things can get much trickier. Often, when a customer is looking at a software release, either for Acceptance testing or in Production, seeing something that doesn’t match their expectations may send them searching for some sort of requirements document or specification to see “Is this what we agreed on.” This is particularly important when it comes to determining whether the customer will have to pay for the “correction” or not. With User Stories, which the Scrum Alliance describes as “not a highly documented series of requirements but rather a reminder to collaborate about the topic of the user story” it can be very difficult to get a full picture of the Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing But the Truth—you have to gather up all the User Stories affecting a particular feature and rebuild that picture of Truth.

Common Ground – User stories for Service-based projects

Getting customers on board with the Agile way of doing things can be difficult, particularly when those customers are not tech-savvy or have no experience with software development projects. For those customers, it’s important to be able to look back to some kind of requirements document and know “this is the agreed-upon Truth.” To further complicate matters, when the customer is the Government there may be laws, regulations, policies, or contractual terms which require creation of a formal requirements document.

In these scenarios, it can be helpful to have a way to transform User Stories into a requirements document, and ensure the requirements document stays up to date as the project evolves. When starting a new project, the User Stories and the Requirements Document will be similar in terms of content, although the structure may differ. As user stories are refined before implementation, the requirements document should be updated to reflect that refinement. Once a user story is “Done” it can be closed and forgotten about (or even destroyed, if you are keeping User Stories on index cards or post-it notes). When a new User Story is created, whether to add a new feature or change an existing feature, the Requirements Document should be updated to reflect the change. In this manner, at any time during the development lifecycle, you can look at something which reflects the Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing But the Truth, while still having the flexibility and collaborative aspects of User Stories.

Keeping User Stories and a Requirements Document in sync is extra work, but that should pay off in the long run as you can ensure that everyone, including the customer, is working from the same definition of Truth.
Women 4 Technology Leadership: An Interview with Jill Campbell

Jill Campbell, IT Director of Heidelberg Distributing, and I had the opportunity to discuss her career path as a female in the IT Industry, the challenges she has faced and advice that helped mold her into the successful leader that she is today.

Our conversation kicked off with Jill discussing what drew her into the IT field. She began telling me about her first summer job during college. She was attending Sinclair Community College, with plans to attend University of Cincinnati for Architecture and landed a summer position at WPAFB doing CAD work. Jill sat near the technical team and at that time the base was in the process of switching over to Ethernet. Curiosity got the best of her and shortly after she transferred to Wright State University to pursue a MIS degree in Networking. After graduation she began her career with networking crimpers in hand.

Jill has built her portfolio from the ground up working in roles ranging from a Helpdesk Technician, Network Administrator, Team Lead, Network Manager, Infrastructure Project Manager, Director, and Vice President across a variety of industries to include banking, automotive, and distribution.

I asked Jill about the highs and lows of her career, as well as any defining moments and she told me about a time when the president of the company she was working for stood in front of the team and said, “Things are going to be rocky, but I promise I won’t mislead you.” This statement may seem minuscule to some but for Jill it struck a cord and helped define who she wanted to be as a leader. It showed his humanity and the genuine care he had for people and for his team.

As Jill moved into one of her first leadership roles, she desired to model her former leader and portray care for her team, but she had to find a balance. As a female it is instinctual to be nurturing and compassionate but she quickly found that these were habits that she would need to find balance with in order to be an effective leader.

“Find a mentor or teacher and latch onto them.” This was some of the best advice Jill was given and is the advice she now gives others entering their careers. In addition to the mentors Jill has leveraged throughout her career, she credits professional organizations and networking groups as significant contributors to her personal and professional growth. Jill is a member of Technology First and Women 4 Technology, along with groups such as the American Business Woman Association (ABWA), the Panerians Group, and Toastmasters. Being a female leader in a predominately male industry, she feels the ABWA gives her balance and a sense of camaraderie; while Toastmasters provides her confidence and assistance in her communication. She talked about the importance of being direct and specific and “knowing how to ask the question the right way, to get the answer that you want.”

In closing, Jill said, “A career is full of peaks and valleys. It is a journey that doesn’t happen overnight. It is necessary to have struggles and feelings of disappointment. Never come in too confident and always listen to understand others perception.”

Hearing Jill’s story was empowering. The journey is never easy but as Jill’s story has told us, with perseverance, self-evolution, and guidance, anything is possible.
What You Missed!

Technology First hosted its ninth annual Taste of IT conference on November 18th at Sinclair Community College. Over 300 attendees and suppliers enjoyed a day of learning and fun! Check out some of what you missed.

Business Intelligence Special Interest Group hosted at Wright State’s DAVE Lab

Wright State University’s Soin College of Business hosted the November 6th Business Intelligence special interest group meeting. The Data Analytics and Visualization Environment (DAVE) allows students, faculty and staff to explore Big Data like never before. The lab provides a modern 1000 sq. ft. space on the second floor of Rike Hall for learning and collaboration. DAVE is fully-equipped with professional hardware and software tools, offering unique opportunities for hands-on analytics experience right on campus.
WORKFORCE PROGRAMS

McKenna Scholarship Opportunity for Southwest Ohio IT Students

The goal of the Robert V. McKenna Scholarship is to build awareness among current college students of the rich and vibrant information technology industry in the Southwest Ohio.

Technology First, with support from the Robert V. McKenna Golf Tournament committee, has awarded information technology college students with over $70,000 in scholarship money since the beginning of their collaboration. Students who demonstrate outstanding academic records in IT-related majors, leadership qualities and professional demeanor are eligible and should apply.

Look for more information on www.technologyfirst.org

Digital Mixer

Take this opportunity to network with IT talent from colleges and universities in the greater Dayton region.

Meet MIS, Computer Science and Computer Engineering Majors from Wright State University, University of Dayton, Sinclair Community College, Cedarville University, Central State University, Clark State Community College and more!

This networking event brings together students, faculty and information technology professionals to provide an opportunity for Great Dayton’s Future IT workforce to connect with regional IT employers.

Wednesday, February 24, 2016
4:00 PM to 6:00 PM
Student Union Apollo Room
Wright State University

Looking for an Executive Director

Exciting Opportunity with the Region’s Leading IT Trade Association

We are looking for a dynamic individual with leadership experience as our current executive director plans to retire in 2016. The executive director will lead the promotion of our trade association, ensure revenue growth, manage the operational budget and drive the expansion of provided services in support of the region’s IT industry.

Do you understand the challenges IT professionals face, have team building skills, and proven ability to translate strategy into action?

For more information go to www.technologyfirst.org/executive-director

Please submit a resume via email to: resumes@technologyfirst.com

Techology First

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