

## Focus. Connect. Lead.

# Conference Summary Report:

## Infrastructure & Operations: Data Center, Server, Storage and IT Operations

The theme of this year's Gartner Symposium/ITxpo was **Focus. Connect. Lead.** A nexus of four disruptive technologies — social, mobile, cloud and information — is revolutionizing business, changing the enterprise ecosystem and placing greater demands on decision makers to drive value and deliver positive business outcomes. More than ever, IT leaders must acquire a new ability to **focus** on the issues that matter, **connect** people and ideas and **lead** with creativity and confidence.



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This summary report takes a high-level view of the concepts, strategies and leadership skills designed to help attendees of the Infrastructure & Operations: Data Center, Server, Storage and IT Operations track address critical trends, technologies and management issues facing IT infrastructure and operations in this new era — from DevOps and managing cloud environments to data center consolidation, storage infrastructure, big data and more. We have highlighted critical take-aways and hot-topic areas that should be on your radar in the coming months, and have provided a brief summary of the key concerns related to data center, servers, storage and IT operations that attendees raised on-site.



“I always leave Gartner Symposium/ITxpo smarter than I was when I arrived. I feel like I get a window into the future here. ”

T. Davis-Muffett, Director,  
Public Sector, NetApp

## Key take-aways

### Integrated systems

There's a growing interest in integrated systems to speed deployment, simplify operations and maximize performance. Gartner has been covering this trend for more than three years as fabric-based infrastructures. In informal polls, users stated that they were intrigued by the possibilities for ROI, but have yet to do a thorough analysis.

### Appliances

Appliances are a growing concern — both physical and, more recently, virtual. Most Gartner Symposium/ITxpo 2012 attendees have had experience with hardware- and function-specific appliances, but they expressed an emerging interest in virtually integrated appliances on host systems that are run for general purpose applications.

### Private cloud

A successful private cloud computing strategy requires more than just technology. People, process and a changing relationship with business are critical issues to consider. IT infrastructure and operations leaders should also be ready to recognize that cloud management is a new control point for data center services.

### Enabling the business

I&O leaders should evaluate how their organization can become a broker of services. Start by including services provided by outside suppliers into your portfolio. Ensuring your end user has the ability to choose the most appropriate service from the most appropriate supplier is an excellent way to demonstrate that the I&O team understands the needs of the business.

## Missed a session or want to see those “aha” moments again?



All full-conference attendees receive free online streaming of available sessions from the event for one year! High-quality recordings feature synchronized video, audio and slides.

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## Key take-aways

### Servers

Cloud and fabric-based infrastructures will be an impetus to redefine our current concept of the traditional server. Servers as static, fixed and finite objects will no longer be a sufficient paradigm to manage the fast-changing IT environment.

### Storage

Storage will remain the focus of operational excellence because it is the most difficult resource to manage effectively in a data center. The good news is that improvements in storage virtualization, SSDs, electronics and algorithms are beginning to keep pace with evolving needs, staff and budget constraints. With that in mind, users should take a top-down approach to redesigning their storage service offerings, operational procedures and storage infrastructure.

“The [nexus] forces challenge us to think about shadow IT and how to engage those stakeholders, as well as embrace these technologies within the enterprise in a safe and scalable fashion.”

C. Steinberg, CIO, Nassau BOCES

## Things to watch out for

### Vendor strategies

Watch for vendors jockeying for position vis-à-vis go-to market strategies, partnerships and key acquisitions — all designed to help them grow their share of integrated systems. Vendors are shaping strategies so that these systems can be deployed as on-premise cloud and infrastructure as a service.

### Internet of Things

The Internet of Things is a concept that describes how the Internet will expand as physical items such as consumer devices and physical assets are connected to the Internet. Even though the concept has been around for years, there has been a recent acceleration in the number and types of things that are being connected and in the technologies for identifying, sensing and communicating. Key advances include: embedded sensors, image recognition and NFC payment.





## Things to watch out for

### Horizontal vs. vertical skills

The explosion of social media, virtualization and the dramatic increases in data center complexity have highlighted a significant issue within IT organizations today. Most IT departments are organized vertically based on skill set (e.g., server team, storage team), but in a highly virtualized environment, the identification of problems is done horizontally. Aggressive IT shops are now looking to create horizontal teams, or at least motivate staff to broaden their skill sets and overall value to the company.

## What attendees asked about

Attendees were concerned about how to compare fabric-based infrastructure approaches and integrated systems from Cisco, IBM, HP, VCE, Dell, Cisco/NetApp Flexpod. In addition to the advice provided on-site, our analysts encouraged attendees to familiarize themselves with Gartner research in this area, particularly on the evolving nature of the fabric resource pool manager.

“This conference has been helpful on many levels, from the networking to product selection to strategic planning.”

R. Ficoturo, ITPS Engagement Manager, Wawa





## Mark your calendar

**Register now and lock in at 2012 rates — registration rates increase beginning January 1, 2013.**

### Help shape Gartner Symposium/ITxpo 2013

Planning for Symposium/ITxpo 2013 is already under way, and your input is critical. If there is something you'd like to share with us regarding any aspect of the event — an idea or suggestion that may have occurred to you since you completed your evaluation form — please email [symposium@eventgartner.com](mailto:symposium@eventgartner.com).

Thank you for your feedback, and we look forward to seeing you again next year at a global Gartner Symposium/ITxpo 2013 event:

[gartner.com/symposium](http://gartner.com/symposium)



**Dubai, UAE**  
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*New location!*



**Cape Town, South Africa**  
September 16 – 18



**Orlando, Florida**  
October 6 – 10  
*Takes place two weeks earlier next year!*



**Tokyo, Japan**  
October 16 – 18



**Goa, India**  
October 21 – 23



**Gold Coast, Australia**  
October 28 – 31



**São Paulo, Brazil**  
November 4 – 6



**Barcelona, Spain**  
November 11 – 14

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**March 17 – 19, 2013**

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## The Digital Enterprise and Beyond

Information and technology are at the forefront of changing business demands, requiring CIOs to evolve how they lead IT. Gartner CIO Leadership Forum 2013 focuses on the future digital leadership requirements by covering what CIOs need to:

**Do new:** Create value using new technologies

**Undo:** End obsolete practices, organizational structures, roles and legacy limitations

**Redo:** Refresh management approaches to drive excellence in information and technology

**Not do:** Follow the pack, continue to make best-practice mistakes, attend to false signals and surf dead-end trends

**Due to the exclusivity of this event, attendees must be preapproved to register.**

**Visit [gartner.com/us/cio](http://gartner.com/us/cio) for more information.**

\*Register now and lock in 2012 rates — registration rates increase beginning January 1, 2013.

### Conference Chairs



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and Gartner Fellow  
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