

Trip Report

Gartner Data Center Conference 2009

December 1 – 4 | Las Vegas, NV | gartner.com/us/datacenter



To provide you with an at-a-glance review, this trip report summarizes key learnings from the recent **Gartner Data Center Conference held in Las Vegas, December 1 – 4, 2009**. You'll find a thumbnail view of select keynotes, relevant take-aways from the most popular sessions and pertinent details to aid you in your reporting efforts.

What People Asked About	page 2
Findings From Gartner Data Center Conference 2009	page 2
Attendee Snapshot	page 3
Gartner Analyst Keynotes	page 5
2009 Sponsors	page 7
Gartner Interactive Polls	page 8

“Great resource to tap into industry trends, hear expert opinions and get long-term insight.”

Conference wrap-up

The 2009 Data Center Conference wasn't the sober event it was last year. Turnout was strong and the mood enthusiastic, with more than 1,500 IT managers and executives from across North America gathering in Las Vegas. In fact, a 13% increase in the number of delegates made this a standout year in which the most impactful trends, technologies and management practices were explored in depth across seven tracks and more than 65 Gartner analyst-led sessions. (Turn to page 3 for our attendee snapshot and a breakdown of the industries and organizations that participated.)

Time to move forward

What's more, change was in the air. Given the state of the economy, participants were still very sensitive to cost and very cautious about where and how to invest. But the message that came across loud and clear was a positive one. Data center and I&O managers are ready to spend in those areas that promise rapid ROI, offer opportunities for competitive advantage and deliver higher quality of services to their businesses. In short, attendees are prepared to focus budget dollars on the places that make a difference.

That message was borne out by the responses received to our initial polling questions, presented in the conference kick-off session. *When asked how their 2010 infrastructure and operations budgets compare with 2009 budgets, 32% of respondents said budgets would be anywhere from one to 10% higher. Asked to identify the areas that would receive the most funding in 2010, 28% looked to new data center facilities projects, including new builds, expansions and upgrades.* (See page 8 for more polling results.)

Save the date

Gartner Data Center Conference 2010 will take place **December 6 – 9 at Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas, NV.**

Be sure to bookmark gartner.com/us/datacenter and check back in the coming months for conference details.

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Portable data centers on the show floor

The idea of putting servers, storage and networking gear into metal shipping containers and linking them together into a data center cluster is a relatively new idea that's catching on. Call it a data center in a box. But is a portable data center a short-term trend or viable alternative to a brick-and-mortar facility? Conference sponsors **IBM, HP and SGI** put the concept to the test on the show floor where each displayed its own version of a 40-foot-long "containerized" data center.



What people asked about

Also notable was the keen interest in the year's hottest topic: cloud computing. Attendees wanted to get a clearer reading of how cloud computing will impact infrastructure and operations and the traditional data center space. *Will this fast-moving trend be viewed as complementary or as a replacement?*

But that wasn't the only question that was top of mind. Attendees were just as focused on aligning IT with the business. *How exactly should one communicate the value of IT in terms that the business understands?*

And then there were pressing concerns surrounding power, cooling and energy consumption. *Since energy costs are the fastest-rising cost element in the data center portfolio, what's the best way to keep them in line or reduce them?*

And what about going green? Should green IT mean more than just being IT energy-efficient? This year's agenda provided the depth and breadth of analysis to explore these issues in full.

Findings from Gartner Data Center Conference 2009

Here are key recommendations from this year's most popular conference sessions by Gartner analysts—especially useful for your 2010 planning and strategy considerations.

IT Operations Management Scenario: Improving Your IT Business Through Metrics (A1)

Speaker: Milind Govekar, Vice President, IT Operations Management

IT operations management professionals are challenged to move forward with IT transformation in the face of increasing change and complexity. To continue the momentum, follow these steps:

- Implement metrics that evaluate your performance, with an eye toward the audience and goals.
- Assess your process maturity using the IT I&O maturity model.
- Develop an IT operations management architecture that defines roles, processes, integration points and tools/technologies.

Server Configuration Management Is Core to Your Data Center Infrastructure: You Can't Manage Without It! (A3)

Speaker: Ronni J. Colville, Vice President and Distinguished Analyst, IT Operations Management

Over 40% of all mission-critical IT service outages are due to people and process errors, with a large number caused by a lack of coordination among change, release and configuration management. What to do?

- Invest in policy and standardization as prerequisites for successful configuration management.
- Prepare for the new dynamics server virtualization will add.
- Remember that compliance requires a focus on automated configuration solutions and that virtualization will accelerate the need.
- Don't expect one vendor to solve all your needs.

Server Virtualization: From Emerging to Mainstream at Light Speed (B1)

Speaker: Thomas J. Bittman, Vice President and Distinguished Analyst, Server Infrastructure and Operations

Server virtualization is growing from 19% penetration to 60% over the next four years.

- If you haven't started virtualizing, now's the time.
- If you're already there, perform a health check on your processes management and security.
- Over the next 90 days, develop a private cloud strategy matched to your virtualization plans.
- Hyper-V customers should consider an upgrade to R2 while VMware customers should consider an upgrade to vSphere 4.0.



“As a first-time attendee I was impressed.”

Attendee snapshot

Who participated in the 2009 conference?

More than 1,500 IT executives, including:

- **Decision makers.** 42% were at the director level or above.

- **Cross-section of industries.**

Attendees came from various industries including manufacturing, financial services, health care, transportation, telecommunications, energy and government.

- **Global 1000.** More than 60% of attendee companies had annual revenues in excess of \$1 billion.

Findings from Gartner Data Center Conference 2009 (cont.)

Virtualization: The Real Benefits and TCO Offsets (B3)

Speaker: Philip Dawson, Vice President, Server Infrastructure and Operations

Virtualization can increase total cost of ownership for a range of reasons, from lack of standards to governance issues. Here's how to reap real benefits:

- When it comes to IT projects, balance the virtualized services with investments and trade-offs.
- Reuse virtualized services across the portfolio.
- Understand the impact on a project's life cycle.
- Focus on management tools and the impact on operations; then get ready to reduce costs by rationalizing infrastructure as part of the virtualization process.

Cloud Computing Management: Making Sure Mountains Aren't Hiding in the Mist (B4)

Speakers: Milind Govekar, Vice President, IT Operations Management, Cameron Haight, Vice President, IT Operations Management

Moving to the clouds won't lessen your management burden. Rather, what's needed is a comprehensive management strategy to ensure return on investment. Here's where to begin:

- Continue to invest in management tools and process.
- Standards are still emerging, so don't bet on widespread commercial adoptions of APIs within the next 18 months.
- Vendors with cloud-computing management technologies run the gamut; be sure that comparative evaluations compare similar capabilities.

Hosted Virtual Desktops: Issues, Implementations and Infrastructure (B7)

Speaker: Mark Margevicius, Vice President, Client Computing

Centralizing the desktop in the data center is one the hottest trend in client computing. But is it right for you? Find out by:

- Documenting and benchmarking the current environment to understand existing costs and issues.
- Running an HVD pilot in a limited-deployment fashion.
- Applying the user segmentation model to identify use types and aiming to have cross-team involvement.

Unlocking the Value of Emerging Storage Technologies: From Thin Provisioning to Cloud (D2)

Speaker: Stanley Zaffos, Vice President, Storage Infrastructure and Operations

Looking to identify opportunities in your environment to leverage innovative storage systems? Start by developing a storage infrastructure road map. Allow emerging storage architectures to compete against established ones. Quantify the benefits and savings of green technologies. Use acceptance test periods to profile the operations characteristics of the emerging storage systems. And be sure to use SLAs to identify potential cost savings to drive the design of your storage infrastructure.

The Impact of Green on the Data Center (E1)

Speaker: John Phelps, Vice President, Server Infrastructure and Operations

If greening the data center is an objective, then the data center management team must ensure that in addition to goals, processes and responsibilities for energy efficiency—which is the biggest environmental issue for data centers—it also has the same for waste management, asset management, capacity management, supporting services and facilities management. Take a holistic view to avoid unnecessary risks. Remember this: sometimes doing one thing in the name of green may hurt more in the long run than it helps.



“No other event brings this much brain power to the broad topic of infrastructure and operations.”

Findings from Gartner Data Center Conference 2009 (cont.)

Emerging Trends in Data Center Design: Modernizing the Beast (E2)

Speaker: David Cappuccio, Vice President, IT Infrastructure and Operations

Consider taking these steps when either retrofitting existing data center space or building smaller, more energy-efficient data centers with life cycles beyond 60 years:

- Build only what you need.
- Scale up, then out.
- Build and rebuild pods.
- Build density zones.
- Consider multi-tiered designs.
- Count life cycle in decades.
- Design for the unknown.

Obtaining Cost-Effective Data Center Facilities (E4)

Speaker: Lydia Leong, Director, Enterprise Network Services

Many factors can underpin your decision to make, lease or buy. Consider the investment strategy of your organization, and identify how much control you are willing to cede. This narrows the field of options you should consider. The more space you need, the more likely construction is to be cost-effective. Turnkey lease options provide a middle ground between building/lease and retrofit and colocation. Colocation is best suited to small footprints and agile needs.

A Look at Data Center Power and Cooling Technologies Present and Future (E5)

Speaker: John Phelps, Vice President, Server Infrastructure and Operations

Set up a procedure to measure your data center energy use, and use your calculated PUE to track your progress in improving data center efficiency. Newer power and cooling technologies will aid in improving your PUE. And be sure to monitor their progress so that you can make best use of them when they become appropriate for your needs.

Storage Trends in the Virtualized Data Center (D3)

Speakers: Robert Passmore, Vice President, Storage Infrastructure and Operations, Roger Cox, Vice President, Storage Markets

By all means listen to vendor visions for the virtualized data center of the future, but don't take them too seriously, especially if short-term purchase decisions are on the table. Make sure you fully understand the impact server virtualization has on your storage infrastructure. Select disk arrays that support a large number of space-efficient writeable snapshots. Choose disk arrays that support thin provisioning and automated quality of service (QoS). Don't forget to follow Gartner-recommended best practices in implementing storage for virtual servers.

Revisit session presentations

Miss a session? Need to review an important chart or recommendations again? Want to share a useful presentation with colleagues? As a conference attendee, you can access every slide from each analyst-led session, free of charge. Login to Agenda Builder at gartner.com/us/datacenter and click on the PDF for the session you are interested in reviewing.

Learn more with relevant research

Want to learn more about the topics that interest you most? Turn to the end of each session presentation for a list of related Gartner research. Gartner research is available on demand at gartner.com

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Gartner Analyst Keynotes



David Cappuccio
Vice President
IT Infrastructure
and Operations

Infrastructure and Operations: Charting a Course for the Coming Decade

Speaker: David Cappuccio, Vice President, IT Infrastructure and Operations

Which key hardware, software and management trends should I&O prepare for over the next five years? Gartner Head of Research for Infrastructure & Operations Dave Cappuccio engaged conference attendees in a lively examination of the game-changing innovations impacting the I&O function. He encouraged them to break out of their “silo” mentality to explore the repercussions of industry developments, societal changes and technological disruptions across all of I&O. Up for discussion were actionable ways in which organizations could capitalize on key trends in the near and long term:

Today

- Focus on virtualization and green IT for immediate cost and flexibility benefits.
- Look at storage virtualization, deduplication and thin provisioning.
- Evaluate Web social software to transform customer and employee interactions.

The next 18 months

- Exploit mashups and cloud-based services to address immediate user needs.
- Link unified communications (UC) to collaboration and enterprise applications to support growth initiatives.
- Start tracking weak signals and subtle business patterns—from everywhere.

Longer term

- Realize that public and private cloud services, together with new servers and specialized systems, can minimize costs and maximize agility.



Ronnie Colville
Vice President and
Distinguished Analyst
IT Operations
Management



Donna Scott
Vice President and
Distinguished Analyst
Server Infrastructure
and Operations

Service Management Perspectives: Building Common Ground between Business and IT

Speakers: Ronnie Colville, Vice President and Distinguished Analyst, IT Operations Management, Donna Scott, Vice President and Distinguished Analyst, Server Infrastructure and Operations

Every CIO survey points to the desire for IT to be in sync with the business strategy. Yet, this goal remains elusive. Does aligning to the business and gaining a coveted seat at the table mean catering to every business whim? Or is there a middle ground? Gartner analysts Ronni Colville and Donna Scott provided insight into how IT can overcome contentious issues and translate the value of service management into business benefit. Their keynote recommendations included:

- Manage business unit (BU) relationships, and deliver against BU leader priorities; in many ways, they are more important than delivering against CEO priorities.
- Speak the language of business.
- Use the I&O maturity model, and reach the level required for your business to perceive high business value in IT.
- Understand business services—their cost and current quality.
- Show value for money—the right services, at the right level of quality, at the right price.
- Invest in IT financial management no matter what level of I&O maturity you have.
- Address both projects and ongoing IT services in project portfolio management (PPM).
- Never outsource strategy and relationship management.
- Aim to be a trusted service provider.

Gartner Analyst Keynotes (cont.)



Carl Claunch
Vice President and
Distinguished Analyst
Server Infrastructure
and Operations

The Most Important Technologies in Your Data Center Future

Speaker: Carl Claunch, Vice President and Distinguished Analyst, Server Infrastructure and Operations

Technology evolution and revolution will change everything about our data centers, from what we place in them to how we operate them. Gartner research analyst Carl Claunch explained exactly how, in a highly informative view of the future. Per his keynote session, here are eight technologies you cannot afford to ignore:

- Cloud computing (including private and hybrid clouds)
- Virtualization for availability (convergence of tools)
- Reshaping the data center (pods and zones)
- IT for green (what IT can do for the environment)
- Client computing (major choices ahead)
- Operational analytics (looking forward, not backward)
- Flash memory (redefining the storage hierarchy)
- Reshaping the server (fabric-/component-based designs)

Customizable post-event worksheet

Take a moment to complete your own post-event trip report, a valuable resource for future reference and a great way to share what you learned with colleagues.



Visit gartner.com/us/datacenter to access the trip report worksheet.

“As much quality information as you could pack into 3.5 days.”



Thank you to our 2009 Gartner Data Center Conference sponsors

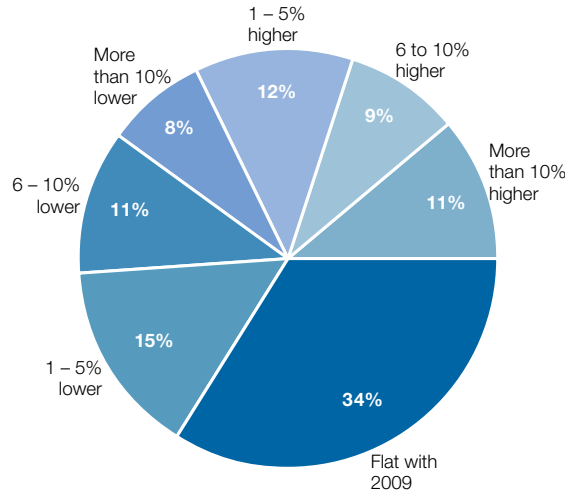
Throughout the conference, the show floor was buzzing with activity as attendees met with solution providers to discuss the latest innovations, services and product offerings. Many thanks to our sponsors for helping make Gartner Data Center Conference 2009 an outstanding experience for everyone involved.

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Gartner interactive polling: What was revealed?

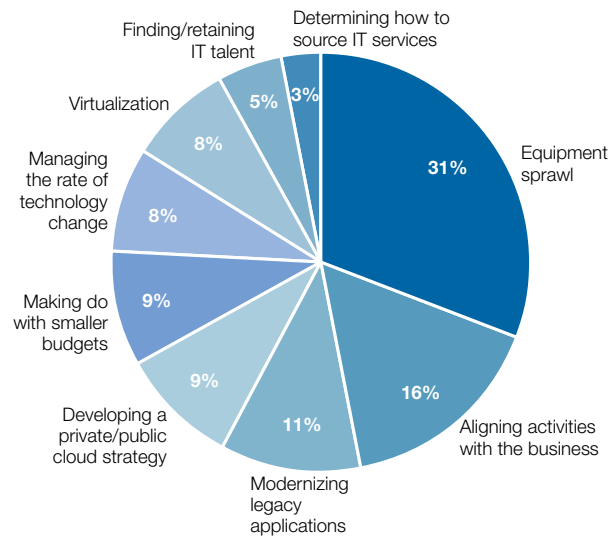
Throughout the conference, electronic polling was used at key sessions to survey attendees on a variety of topics. See a sampling of results.

Polling question: How does your 2010 infrastructure and operations budget compare to 2009?



Polling Question: What is the largest data center challenge you currently face?

Data center space, power and/or cooling because of:



Polling Question: Which of these areas is going to get the most funding in 2010?

