Gartner IT Infrastructure, Operations & Management Summit 2009

Post Event Brief

The 2009 Gartner IT Infrastructure, Operations & Management Summit was held June 23–25 at the Gaylord Palms in Orlando. This report summarizes the three-day event and its highlights, topics, and takeaways, including:

Key Summit Takeaways ................................................................. Page 2
Conference Highlights ................................................................. Page 3
Top-of-Mind Concerns (What Attendees Asked About) .................... Page 4
Top Ten Best-Rated Sessions ......................................................... Page 4
Keynote Addresses ....................................................................... Page 5
Snapshot of Attendees ................................................................. Page 6
Great Suggestions for Next Year .................................................. Page 7
Sponsors ....................................................................................... Page 8

Overview

It’s a unique moment in infrastructure and operations. Cloud computing, virtualization, and other significant trends present challenges even as they offer unprecedented opportunities. This year’s Gartner IT Infrastructure, Operations & Management Summit drilled down on how to make the most of these opportunities even in a difficult economic climate. Sessions delivered both immediate and longer-term steps to maximize the benefits of cloud computing, virtualization, improved network design, green IT, and more. We looked at Oracle’s acquisition of Sun Microsystems, the delicate balance between cost cutting and long-term agility, and how to address the staggering explosion in data.

This year, we felt it was particularly important to also deliver a bigger, more integrated view across servers, storage, networking, and IT operations. With this in mind, we added panel discussions on cloud computing and disruptive technologies as well as a full track on networking.

Overall, it was an enthusiastically received and incredibly focused and professional event loaded with practical insights and actionable takeaways, with heavy attendance and lively participation in sessions, analyst/user roundtable discussions, and the exhibitor hall.

“A great opportunity to ensure that our planning is in line with the good/best practices and research from Gartner.”

Save the date. Gartner IT Infrastructure, Operations & Management Summit 2010 will take place June 14-16, 2010 at the JW Marriott Grande Lakes in Orlando, Florida. Bookmark gartner.com/us/iom and check back this fall to stay abreast of conference details as they develop.
Key Summit Takeaways

1. **Everyone must understand cloud computing and how it will impact infrastructure and operations (I&O).** Among the most important discussions at the conference, the cloud computing panel with Gartner analysts Tom Bittman, Cameron Haight, Mark Fabbi, and Stan Zaffos offered a reality check on both fears and expectations. They discussed the opportunities cloud computing presents when done right, as well as its limitations and potential pitfalls, and what to make of the evolving marketplace.

2. **Virtualization is rapidly moving from adolescence to maturity.** Most organizations have implemented some kind of virtualization program. Now the issue is how to grapple with management challenges, make sure your virtualization program delivers on its promise, and plan for the next wave of virtualization. Cameron Haight offered recommendations for staying on top of virtualization (have a goal, a plan, and a commitment to continuously monitor and share your results), and for using virtualization as a step toward the clouds.

3. **Now that Oracle has acquired Sun, what next?** The proposed merger and how it may change the industry landscape was a hot topic just before the conference. To help sort through the potential consequences, we hosted an open-mike session – a conference first – with three of our most knowledgeable Gartner experts. The analysts provided a pragmatic and insightful look each of Sun’s product lines and how each was likely to be impacted by the proposed acquisition. The analysts then addressed attendee’s questions and concerns.

4. **You can’t manage what you can’t measure.** Again and again we heard the call to implement metrics for monitoring, measuring, sharing, and evaluating progress and performance. Nowhere was this emphasized more than in Donna Scott’s IT operations management scenario, a popular presentation that also highlighted the importance of assessing process maturity and developing a detailed management architecture.

5. **The Great Data Deluge has only just begun. Are you ready?** Dave Cappuccio’s keynote look at the next five years offered some scary estimates. Enterprise data growth? Up 650% by 2015. How much unique new information will be generated next year? More than in the previous 5,000 years. Number of text messages sent in the last 24 hours? One for every human on the planet, plus some. Key takeaway? Focus on virtualization and green IT for cost benefits now. Use social software to transform relationships.

6. **Perception is reality: It’s all about end-user satisfaction.** David Coyle’s popular session on IT service and support maturity emphasized the importance of end-user customer satisfaction to the overall health of the IT organization. 4% percent of the IT budget (help desk spend) accounts for about half of the perceived value of the entire IT organization. The secret to success? A laser focus on end-user satisfaction, methodically documented and made highly visible.

7. **Get a handle on VM sprawl before it mauls your budget.** Cost-cutting and cost optimization are on everyone’s mind these days as we are all asked to do more with less. When it comes to virtualization, it’s important to keep an eye on hard and soft dollars as well as VM sprawl and how it can impact the business.

8. **New networking design practices mean better design, investment, and business alignment.** When network architects think about how users interact with the network before they make technology decisions, they ensure much better business alignment, a better network, and significant savings. There are huge opportunities for savings when you strive to improve processes, not replace technology; choose capital costs over operating costs; quantify productivity; and buy what you need, not what you might need.

9. **Prepare for a return to growth in any case.** When the economy turns around, you’ll need to be poised for action and agile enough to strike quickly when opportunity arises. For now, that may mean more cost cutting, but done in such a way that it doesn’t damage your ability to move forward when the time is right.
Conference Highlights

Five keynote sessions delivered powerful messages on the hottest topics in I&O. Presentations and panel discussions covered cloud computing’s impact, the I&O five-year scenario, top emerging and disruptive technologies in I&O, the Oracle-Sun merger, and communicating the business value of I&O. Returning conference alumni received a complimentary copy of keynote presenter Richard Hunter’s book, *IT Risk: Turning Business Threats into Competitive Advantage*.

More than 45 sessions took place across five tracks, covering IT Operations, Virtualization, IT Modernization & Consolidation, Networking & Communications, and Cost Optimization in Infrastructure & Operations: Thriving During Difficult Times.

More than 150 private one-on-one sessions were held with Gartner analysts, providing attendees with personalized insight and advice. Popular topics included cloud computing, virtualization, backup and recovery, cloud storage, desktop virtualization, CMDB, VMWare, asset management trends, data center automation, run book automation, the strategic roadmap, and many more.

18 informal roundtable discussions among end users, moderated by an analyst, produced great results and many useful new relationships as attendees exchanged insights and experience on key topics. Among the most popular discussions:

- Network Management Tools of the Trade
- Early Experiences in Unified Communications
- Server Virtualization: The Move to Mission Critical
- Using Virtualization Technologies in Your Disaster Recovery Strategy
- Cloud Computing: Managing the Next Wave
- Virtualization in the Unix World
- Backup and Recovery Modernization
- The Challenges of IT Modernization in the Public Sector
- Successful strategies for Virtualization in the Public Sector

Four Gartner invited end-user case study sessions covered such topics as Virtualization on the Frontlines, Journey to a “Green” Tier 3+ Data Center, and Deduplication & Backup: Production Experiences. In every session, key leaders from the implementation shared the what, how, why, and results of their strategy and answered questions.

New format: A topical, dynamic open mike session provided insightful analysis. When the Oracle-Sun merger caused major headlines just before the event, we knew we had to address it. The solution was a live Q&A with attendees and a panel of analysts that was among the conferences most exciting and informative discussions.

30 exhibitors – Top solution providers sent their most knowledgeable representatives to answer questions and demo new products.

“Good variety of topics in the I&O space. Good value in “what’s new/buzz” in technology world, i.e., cloud.”

“Cost reduction and consolidation are a must in these times.”
Top-of-Mind Concerns (What Attendees Asked About)

How and when is cloud computing going to impact me?
A pervasive concern voiced repeatedly in different sessions at the conference was the cloud. We know it’s coming. What everyone wants to know is when cloud computing will impact infrastructure and operations, exactly what kind of impact it will have, and what organizations need to do to prepare for it now, in the next 18 months, and over the next few years. Analysts hit the topic in multiple sessions and a keynote panel debate.

VMware has enjoyed a near monopoly in the virtualization marketplace. With Microsoft’s Hyper-V gaining ground, are things about to get ugly?

Selecting server virtualization technologies isn’t simple or easy. Tom Bittman addressed the issue in depth in a session titled, “Virtualization with VMware or Hyper-V: What You Need to Know.” He surveyed the future of virtualization, the vendors, what criteria to use, how these choices relate to cloud computing, and more. The big news is there’s more headroom in virtualization market expansion than you might imagine, from virtualizing servers to infrastructure management and automation to cloud computing. The key takeaways: Virtualization is about more than cost benefits. It’s a significant on-ramp to cloud computing. VMware will dominate large enterprises; Microsoft will take the smaller fish. Yes, virtualization can be done badly. It’s called virtual sprawl and you must avoid it.

Energy consumption is getting serious. How can I go green, or at least trim the monthly bill?
Dave Cappuccio gave a well attended presentation called, “Energy-Efficient, Low-Cost, High-Performance Data Centers: Emerging Reality or Just a Dream?” His best practices for reducing electrical consumption included six action steps: virtualize, use outside air, build only what you need, arrange hot and cold aisles to reduce air movement, focus on light-load efficiency instead of full load in your power equipment, and choose row and rack-based cooling for high density. The good news: By 2011, the use of efficient facilities design will reduce data center energy consumption by 50% compared to today’s environments.

Top 10 Best-Rated Sessions

- E7. 10 Ways to Extend the Life of Your Data Center
- A6. ITIL Version 3 Gains Momentum in Transforming IT Operations
- K3. Communicating the Business Value of IT I&O
- D4. How to Save $120 Billion on Networking and Communications
- A7. IT Operations Management Vendors’ Product Development Priorities, Strategies and Architectures
- C3. Energy-Efficient, Low-Cost, High-Performance Data Centers: Emerging Reality or Just a Dream?
- C5. Multicore and Multithreading and the Impact They Will Have
- A9. There’s More to IT Service Portfolio Management Than Just the IT Service Catalog
- UE4. Driving Down Costs While Building Up People in Challenging Times
- B6. Using Virtualization for Server Consolidation in the Non-x86 World
- D6. Building Real Redundancy in Your Network Without Blowing the Budget
Keynote Addresses

**Infrastructure & Operations: A Five-Year Scenario**

One sure way to wow an audience is to drop some riveting statistics, and that’s exactly what Dave Cappuccio did in his keynote. In a typical x86 server, 65% of the power used is being used to do...NOTHING. Of the 650% estimated growth in enterprise data over the next five years, 80% will be unstructured! And if that’s not enough to get your attention, it’s estimated that 40 exabytes (that’s 4.0 x 1019) of unique new information will be generated worldwide this year. Luckily, he followed up with Monday morning action plans for the data deluge, energy, consumerization and social software, unified communications, resource tracking, mobile and wireless, system density, mashups and portals, and cloud computing.

**Communicating the Business Value of IT Infrastructure & Operations**

In our pre-event survey, many attendees requested keynote presentations with strong content on the business value of IT, a hot topic in times of intense budget scrutiny. Richard Hunter’s keynote presentation fit that need perfectly and was extremely well received, earning some of the highest review marks of the conference. He summed up the business context for the value of IT infrastructure, operations, and management with three simple imperatives: run the business, grow the business, and transform the business. Or even more simply: IT doesn’t align with the business, IT is the business. It’s all about positioning IT as an investment in near- and long-term business performance. Final takeaway: Always focus your comments on business outcomes.

**Hot Topic: What to Expect from Oracle’s Acquisition of Sun**

When recent headlines got everyone talking, worrying, and hypothesizing in the run-up to the conference, we decided to try an entirely new format of keynote presentation. We pulled together our top three Gartner analysts on the topic covering the storage, servers, and IT operations aspects of the merger and then handed an open mike to the audience. The result was an incredibly dynamic and insightful conversation, occasionally debate, about the potential ramifications of an Oracle-owned Sun.

**The Top Emerging and Disruptive Technologies in Infrastructure & Operations**

Four of Gartner’s most incisive and informed researcher analysts in I&O gathered to debate what lies ahead, which trends will have the most impact, and what those impacts might be. The key disrupters coming your way are ubiquitous virtualization that takes us far beyond consolidation, converging communications and IP everything, operations process automation and run book automation, and cloud and alternative storage architecture.

**Cloud Computing: Will it Impact Infrastructure & Operations**

Another popular keynote panel featured four analysts on the evolution of cloud computing, where it’s headed, and its undeniably serious impact. As the market shifts in new directions and new computing alternatives emerge, the cloud will open new doors even as it presents challenges that require new focus and new skills, such as “cloudsourcing,” for example. While the opportunities will be tremendous, it doesn’t mean the management burden goes away or failures never happen. The cloud can fail just as readily as any other form of storage, as demonstrated by recent high-profile failures at Amazon, Microsoft, Salesforce.com, and Google.

“Well organized event; the content confirmed my thinking more than gave me any new insight.”
**Most valuable aspects of the event**

- The access to the analysts.
- Very informationally useful. Excellent networking opportunities.
- Hearing where everyone else is struggling. We are not alone.
- Access to analysts and the keynotes. Networking with others.
- The knowledge of exhibitors.
- Opportunity to look at the future and to understand current best practices.
- Industry trends.
- Practical advice that goes beyond research notes.

**Snapshot of Attendees**

Who participated in the 2009 conference?

More than 500 IT and business executives representing all industries. The audience included:

- **Decision makers:** 45% 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:** 51% of attendees’ companies had annual revenues in excess of $1 billion.

96.5% of 2009 attendees told us they would recommend the Gartner IT Infrastructure, Operations & Management Summit to their colleagues!

“*The event covered a lot of trends to watch out for and the importance of proper planning to ensure business values are achieved.*”

“*The event was informative with lots of real experience shared openly and freely.*”
Great Suggestions for Next Year
Topics and sessions you would be most interested in at the event in the future.
Best practices; trends/futures of Storage; configuration management; virtualization; telecom futures; cloud computing; Infrastructure planning; server consolidation; Trends and futures for Storage and Unix; cost reduction; unified communications; Disaster recovery; green technologies, new trends, data center management; hot topics, five year forecasts.

Missed this year’s event? Come to the Gartner Data Center Conference.
Get caught up on all your infrastructure, operations, networking, and data center issues before the end of the year at the Gartner 28th Annual Data Center Conference, December 1–4, 2009, in Las Vegas.
For complete details, visit gartner.com/us/datacenter.

“Many very relevant topics that relate to my business needs.”

“A series of actionable steps that you can take back to your organization.”

New! Learn More with Relevant Research
Want to learn more about the topics that interest you most? Flip to the end of each session presentation for a list of related Gartner research notes. Gartner research is available on demand at gartner.com.

Revisit Session Presentation Slides
Miss a session? Need to see that chart or those recommendations again? Want to share a particularly useful presentation with colleagues? As an attendee, you can access every slide from every session online, free of charge. Visit the Agenda Builder at gartner.com/us/iom to request a documentation key and get started.

Discount Extended! Save $300 When You Order Events on Demand
We’ve extended the on-site conference discount until August 17. Pay only $295 – a $300 savings – when you purchase Events on Demand, the multimedia offering that includes access to all session slides and audio. For more information and to order, send an email to eventsondemand@gartner.com and mention code str25ext.
Thank You to Our 2009 Gartner IT Infrastructure, Operations & Management Summit Sponsors

Throughout the Summit, 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 IT Infrastructure, Operations & Management Summit 2009 an outstanding educational event for everyone involved.

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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/iom to access the trip report worksheet.