

The Server Landscape Is Changing

Mike Chuba

Dramatic changes will reshape the server landscape during the next five years. A potential architectural and server management renaissance could create dramatic cost savings, or chaos, in next-generation deployments.

ANALYSIS

In this Spotlight, we take a strategic look at the server market and how it is likely to change during the next five years. Commodity-based hardware technologies will play a major and defining role in future server architectures. Budget-constrained enterprises are looking for means to cut costs — not just incrementally, but dramatically. We look at a potential architectural and server management renaissance that could create dramatic cost savings — or chaos — in next-generation deployments.

New generations of hardware platforms are emerging to challenge mainframes and large symmetric multiprocessing (SMP) systems, thus creating new opportunities and new challenges for many data center executives. Strong differentiation will come across multiple dimensions: price/performance; heavy workload performance; availability, density, heat and power consumption, and entry price; and ease of upgrade, ease of re-provisioning the operating system, and application updates and changes. We believe that the result will be an inflation rather than a consolidation of vendor server portfolios, thus forcing IS organizations to juggle long-term vs. short-term platform decisions through the five-year planning period. Emerging technologies, such as blade servers and grid computing, will require a thorough understanding on the part of those responsible for server decisions during the coming years. This Spotlight provides you with the guidance necessary to plan your procurement and deployment strategies (see "The Future of the Server: A Five-Year Outlook").

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