

IBM Pushes Into the Cloud With Cloud Implementation Services

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IBM's implementation service offering for private cloud computing provides a strong entry point for larger organizations. But smaller enterprises may want to look elsewhere for scalable, flexible testing resources.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Event

On 5 May 2009, IBM announced IBM Global Technology Services (GTS) Implementation Services for Cloud Computing. Targeted at the test environment, this set of services includes design and implementation services that deliver a preconfigured self-service test platform. The platform combines service request management, automated provisioning and configuration management in a private cloud environment to virtualize test resources. Resources can include IBM and non-IBM components. Services support implementation of the newly announced WebSphere CloudBurst, an appliance-based cloud solution that is preloaded with WebSphere environments.

Analysis

While there is more interest than action in the cloud computing market, IBM is clearly staking out a position with this announcement. Interest in cloud computing is growing very rapidly, but enterprises are taking an understandably cautious approach. IBM's offering provides customers with an "on ramp" to cloud computing by transforming their test environments into a cloud. This first cloud appliance is an entry point for IBM. If this offering succeeds, IBM is likely to introduce other private and public cloud-based services offerings.

IBM piloted the offering with clients and within its own company. This test environment provided a good "proving ground" to test a new computing concept, as a testing environment can be complex and requires spikes in resources. A cloud environment allows the organization to access a pool of resources in a test center that offers the flexibility and scalability to handle fluctuating demands, and offers potential cost savings through on-demand provisioning of virtualized resources. Automated provisioning and configuration can also increase speed-to-solution and reduce errors. The test environment also allows other organizations to test the cloud concept in a way that solves a "bottleneck" issue in a secure environment without jeopardizing mission-critical applications.

However, alternatives to IBM's private test cloud services are available. In November 2008, Capgemini introduced its IT professional services related to public cloud computing services in a partnership with Amazon Web Services. The offering was aimed at helping large and midsize enterprises take advantage of Amazon Web Services' cloud computing offerings. One use of this initiative is application development and testing in the cloud. While IBM is making its application development tools available for Amazon Elastic Compute Cloud, IBM GTS does not yet have a comparable public cloud-testing services offering. Since scalability is one of the key advantages of cloud computing, IBM's offering based on a private cloud would not make much business sense for smaller enterprises.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Large enterprises:** If your enterprise is interested in transitioning to a private cloud computing model, consider IBM's private test cloud implementation services. These services provide a low-risk entry point into the new flexible cloud computing model without affecting mission-critical applications.
- **IT professional services firms:** Start investigating and crafting consulting and system integration offerings in cloud computing services. While the cloud computing concept will

take a while to gain mainstream acceptance, its value proposition is strong and today's economic environment will only accelerate its appeal.

RECOMMENDED READING

- “Forecast: Sizing the Cloud; Understanding the Opportunities in Cloud Services” — Gartner estimates that the current market for cloud services is \$46.4 billion, and that it will reach \$150.1 billion by 2013. **By Ben Pring and others**
- “Five Refining Attributes of Public and Private Cloud Computing” — Gartner provide insight into distinguishing public cloud computing from private cloud computing, as well as a refined definition of cloud computing **By Daryl C. Plummer and others**

(You may need to sign in or be a Gartner client to access the documents referenced in this First Take.)

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