How startups can get a big boost from cloud computing services

Cloud computing providers offer a wide range of services that go beyond technical solutions, enabling startups to scale and grow easily

One of the many challenges startups face when their platform takes off, is the ability to scale their functions quickly enough to accommodate a rapidly growing number of clients.

Cloud computing providers help startups work around this problem by offering services such as [**Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS)**](http://www.interoute.com/what-iaas) platforms, which offer not only customisable and intuitive interfaces that help startups implement new functions and changes to their platform effortlessly, but also a robust framework that ensures the security of the startups’ platforms. This service also frees startups from having to allocate resources and time to maintain the server, with no extra cost on functions they don’t need, allowing them to focus on building their business.

We take a look at three startups that will be appearing at this year’s [**Echelon Asia Summit**](http://e27.co/echelon/asia/) and find out how they have benefitted from using cloud computing solutions.

### Flexibility, scalability, reliability and support

[**StaffOnDemand**](http://www.staffondemand.sg/), an enterprise-level cloud recruitment platform based in Singapore, adopted cloud computing because of its ability to help businesses scale quickly without the necessity of buying hardware to store their data, as well as its ability to cater to different specifications.

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In a chat with **e27**, Christine Liu, Founder, [**StaffOnDemand**](http://e27.co/tag/staffondemand), explained that one of the key advantages of utilising cloud computing is its user-friendly interface and the wide range of customisability. With a diverse portfolio of clients ranging from fast food chain [**Subway**](http://www.subway.com.sg/), to Singapore-based Internet service provider [**MyRepublic**](http://e27.co/tag/my-republic), customisation and flexibility are essential to cater to the varying needs of each individual client. Citing an example, Liu said that to tweak or add a new function to their platform, all she needed to do was to select the option from a drop-down list.

Cloud computing providers such as [**SoftLayer**](http://e27.co/tag/softlayer) provide a single management system that congregates all functions of the platform into a single interface, allowing the client to access, deploy services via mobile apps, API (Application Program Interface) or a web portal.

[**Trackomatic,**](https://trakomatic.com/) a service that provides customer analytics to retailers and mall operators, invests in complex algorithms in order to identify shopper demographics and track them comprehensively.

“In order to write these algorithms, we actually train the large amount of data that we collect from the field, so that is how we keep things accurate,” said Prakashanth Ravichandran, CTO and Co-founder, [**Trakomatic**](http://e27.co/tag/trackomatic). To process and manage the high volume of data, high speed and robust servers are required.

“Cloud computing companies such as [**SoftLayer**](http://www.softlayer.com/info/free-cloud?utm_source=e27&utm_medium=article&utm_content=APAC|Echelon_Startups&utm_campaign=e27_Echelon_2015&utm_term=%7bkeyword%7d&placement=%7bplacement%7d) allow us to build very high-end CPU and GPU servers. We have dozens of Enterprise Grade Models from Intel and Nvidia to choose from. We can also fine tune every single hardware parameter. Within minutes of configuring, we have a machine ready to work on (and) we are also able to scale and deploy without compromising the performance,” Ravichandran said.

Trakomatic makes use of high-speed Bare Metal servers which are dedicated to a specific client, meaning that there is no need to share resources with other users. “We are able to get very good benchmark performances, so if you are doing something and it takes 10 minutes, the next time you do it, it will still take 10 minutes, so it has that sort of reliability,” Ravichandran said.

Speedy and comprehensive technical support is also an aspect that should not be overlooked when it comes to cloud computing. The decision to go with one cloud computing provider or the other could hinges on providing good after-sales support.

Phuc Le, Founder and CEO of Vietnam-based social shopping platform [**Wiindi**](http://e27.co/tag/windii) recounted his experience with SoftLayer’s support team.

“I really like the support. Just last Saturday, we had an urgent issue with our server, I then pinged the support team at Saturday lunchtime, he quickly escalated it to the System Engineer, and the issue was fixed very quickly,” he said.

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This sentiment was also echoed by StaffOnDemand. “They (SoftLayer) have very instantaneous customer service, so we can actually send a ticket up, and they respond very quickly to us,” Liu said.



### Lending a boost to startups with incubator programmes

Aside from cloud-computing solutions, some cloud providers also provide startups with special support programmes. For example, SoftLayer, an IBM company, which has over 20 data centres worldwide and serves over 28,000 customers, offers free cloud infrastructure credits as well as opportunities for networking and development through marketing programmes such as the[**Catalyst Startup Program**](http://www.softlayer.com/catalyst?utm_source=e27&utm_medium=article&utm_content=APAC%7CEchelon_Startups&utm_campaign=e27_Echelon_2015&utm_term=%7Bkeyword%7D&placement=%7Bplacement%7D).

“Like the upcoming [**Echelon Asia Summit 2015**](http://e27.co/tag/echelon-asia-summit), it is actually partnering with us by offering a marketing support programme, so we can do joint marketing with SoftLayer,” said Liu.

The Catalyst Startup Programme, which began in 2011, has attracted 800 participants in a[**three-year span**](http://asmarterplanet.com/blog/2014/03/ibm-softlayer-catalyst-startups.html). Besides attracting Asian startups like StaffonDemand, Trakomatic and Wiindi, Catalyst has extensive global coverage which includes Europe-based startup Medtep, Canadian startups, including Mnubo and Epilogger, and ChannelPace from Australia.

[***Echelon Asia Summit 2015***](http://e27.co/echelon/asia/)is a conference where startups, investors, technology leaders and industry representatives across Asia, converge to discuss and leverage on the future trends currently shaping Asia’s Internet and mobile markets.