Amazon Web Services - Cloud Computing

In 2006, **Amazon Web Services (AWS)** started to offer IT services to the market in the form of web services, which is nowadays known as **cloud computing**. With this cloud, we need not plan for servers and other IT infrastructure which takes up much of time in advance. Instead, these services can instantly spin up hundreds or thousands of servers in minutes and deliver results faster. We pay only for what we use with no up-front expenses and no long-term commitments, which makes AWS cost efficient.

Today, AWS provides a highly reliable, scalable, low-cost infrastructure platform in the cloud that powers multitude of businesses in 190 countries around the world.

What is Cloud Computing?

Cloud computing is an internet-based computing service in which large groups of remote servers are networked to allow centralized data storage, and online access to computer services or resources.

Using cloud computing, organizations can use shared computing and storage resources rather than building, operating, and improving infrastructure on their own.

Cloud computing is a model that enables the following features.

- Users can provision and release resources on-demand.

- Resources can be scaled up or down automatically, depending on the load.

- Resources are accessible over a network with proper security.

- Cloud service providers can enable a pay-as-you-go model, where customers are charged based on the type of resources and per usage.

Types of Clouds

There are three types of clouds − Public, Private, and Hybrid cloud.

Public Cloud

In public cloud, the third-party service providers make resources and services available to their customers via Internet. Customer's data and related security is with the service providers' owned infrastructure.

Private Cloud

A private cloud also provides almost similar features as public cloud, but the data and services are managed by the organization or by the third party only for the customer's organization. In this type of cloud, major control is over the infrastructure so security related issues are minimized.

Hybrid Cloud

A hybrid cloud is the combination of both private and public cloud. The decision to run on private or public cloud usually depends on various parameters like sensitivity of data and applications, industry certifications and required standards, regulations, etc.

Cloud Service Models

There are three types of service models in cloud − IaaS, PaaS, and SaaS.

IaaS

IaaS stands for **Infrastructure as a Service**. It provides users with the capability to provision processing, storage, and network connectivity on demand. Using this service model, the customers can develop their own applications on these resources.

PaaS

PaaS stands for **Platform as a Service**. Here, the service provider provides various services like databases, queues, workflow engines, e-mails, etc. to their customers. The customer can then use these components for building their own applications. The services, availability of resources and data backup are handled by the service provider that helps the customers to focus more on their application's functionality.

SaaS

SaaS stands for **Software as a Service**. As the name suggests, here the third-party providers provide end-user applications to their customers with some administrative capability at the application level, such as the ability to create and manage their users. Also some level of customizability is possible such as the customers can use their own corporate logos, colors, etc.

Advantages of Cloud Computing

Here is a list of some of the most important advantages that Cloud Computing has to offer −

- **Cost-Efficient** − Building our own servers and tools is time-consuming as well as expensive as we need to order, pay for, install, and configure expensive hardware, long before we need it. However, using cloud computing, we only pay for the amount we use and when we use the computing resources. In this manner, cloud computing is cost efficient.

- **Reliability** − A cloud computing platform provides much more managed, reliable and consistent service than an in-house IT infrastructure. It guarantees 24x7 and 365 days of

service. If any of the server fails, then hosted applications and services can easily be transited to any of the available servers.

- **Unlimited Storage** − Cloud computing provides almost unlimited storage capacity, i.e., we need not worry about running out of storage space or increasing our current storage space availability. We can access as much or as little as we need.

- **Backup & Recovery** − Storing data in the cloud, backing it up and restoring the same is relatively easier than storing it on a physical device. The cloud service providers also have enough technology to recover our data, so there is the convenience of recovering our data anytime.

- **Easy Access to Information** − Once you register yourself in cloud, you can access your account from anywhere in the world provided there is internet connection at that point. There are various storage and security facilities that vary with the account type chosen.

Disadvantages of Cloud Computing

Although Cloud Computing provides a wonderful set of advantages, it has some drawbacks as well that often raise questions about its efficiency.

Security issues

Security is the major issue in cloud computing. The cloud service providers implement the best security standards and industry certifications, however, storing data and important files on external service providers always bears a risk.

AWS cloud infrastructure is designed to be the most flexible and secured cloud network. It provides scalable and highly reliable platform that enables customers to deploy applications and data quickly and securely.

Technical issues

As cloud service providers offer services to number of clients each day, sometimes the system can have some serious issues leading to business processes temporarily being suspended. Additionally, if the internet connection is offline then we will not be able to access any of the applications, server, or data from the cloud.

Not easy to switch service providers

Cloud service providers promises vendors that the cloud will be flexible to use and integrate, however switching cloud services is not easy. Most organizations may find it difficult to host and integrate current cloud applications on another platform. Interoperability and support issues may arise such as applications developed on Linux platform may not work properly on Microsoft Development Framework (.Net).