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What Is Cloud Computing?

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The term "cloud" is analogical to "Internet". The term "Cloud Computing" is based on cloud drawings used in the past to represent telephone networks and later to depict Internet in .

Cloud computing is Internet based computing where virtual shared servers provide software, infrastructure, platform, devices and other resources and hosting to customers on a pay-as-you-use basis. All information that a digitized system has to offer is provided as a service in the cloud computing model. Users can access these services available on the "Internet cloud" without having any previous know-how on managing the resources involved. Thus, users can concentrate more on their core business processes rather than spending time and gaining knowledge on resources needed to manage their business processes.

Cloud computing customers do not own the physical infrastructure; rather they rent the usage from a third-party provider. This helps them to avoid huge . They consume resources as a service and pay only for resources that they use. Most cloud computing infrastructures consist of services delivered through common centres and built on servers. Sharing resources amongst can improve, as servers are not unnecessarily left idle, which can reduce costs significantly while increasing the speed of application development.

Cloud Architecture:

Cloud computing architecture consists of two components "the front end" and "the back end". The front end of the cloud computing system comprises the client's device (or it may be computer network) and some applications are needed for accessing the cloud computing system. Back end refers to the cloud itself which may encompass various computer machines, data storage systems and servers. Group of these clouds make a whole cloud computing system. The whole system is administered via a central server that is also used for monitoring clientís demand and traffic ensuring smooth functioning of the system. A special type of software called "Middleware" is used to allow computers that are connected on the network to communicate with each other. Cloud computing systems also must have a copy of all its clientsí data to restore the service which may arise due to a device breakdown. Making copy of data is called redundancy and cloud computing service providers provide data redundancy.

Deployment Models:

There are four different deployment models of cloud computing:

Public Cloud: Public or external cloud is traditional cloud computing where resources are dynamically provisioned on a fine-grained, self-service basis over the Internet or via and or from an off-site third-party provider who bills on a fine-grained basis

Community Cloud: If several organizations have similar requirements and seek to share infrastructure to realize the benefits of cloud computing, then a community cloud can be established. This is a more expensive option as compared to public cloud as the costs are spread over fewer users as compared to a public cloud. However, this option may offer a higher level of privacy, security and/or policy compliance.

Hybrid Cloud: Hybrid Cloud means either two separate clouds joined together (public, private, internal or external) or a combination of virtualized cloud server instances used together with real physical hardware. The most correct definition of the term "Hybrid Cloud" is probably the use of physical hardware and virtualized cloud server instances together to provide a single common service. Two clouds that have been joined together are more correctly called a "combined cloud".

Private Clouds: Private clouds describe offerings that deploy cloud computing on private networks. It consists of applications or virtual machines in a company's own set of hosts. They provide the benefits of utility computing -shared hardware costs, the ability to recover from failure, and the ability to scale up or down depending upon demand.

Benefits of Cloud Computing:

The benefits of cloud computing for an enterprise include:

Reduction in upfront capital expenditure on hardware and software deployment. Consumption is usually billed on a utility (like phone bills) or subscription (like magazines) model. Users can terminate the contract at any time and are often covered by Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with financial penalties. This reduces risk and uncertainty and ensures return on investment (ROI).

Location independence, so long as there is access to the Internet

Increased flexibility and market agility as the quick deployment model of cloud computing increases the ability to re-provision rapidly as required

Allows the enterprise to focus on its core business

Increased competitive advantage

Increased security at a much lesser cost as compared to traditional standalone applications due to centralization of data and increased security-focused resources

Easy to maintain as they don't have to be installed on each user's computer

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Cloud Computing Market Size:

According to a study conducted by Forbes, the global market for enterprise cloud-based services will grow from $12.1 billion in 2010 to $35.6 billion in 2015. The year-on-year growth rate will be 43% in 2011, but will decrease to 13% over the next five years. Software-as-a-service (SaaS) will account for 70% of revenue in 2010, while 30% will be related to infrastructure-as-a-service (IaaS). Another report by IDC states worldwide revenue from public IT cloud services exceeded $16 billion in 2009 and is forecasted to reach $55.5 billion in 2014, representing a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 27.4 percent.

Cloud Computing Integrated Business Applications Suite ìLuitBizî:

LuitBiz (http://www.luitinfotech.com/products/luitbiz-intro.html) is a cloud computing integrated business applications suite with ERP, CRM, HRM (including Employee Self Service and Collaboration) and DMS applications. LuitBiz has been developed and marketed by Luit Infotech (http://www.luitinfotech.com), a Bangalore (India) - based software company.

Companies can use "LuitBiz", a single software, to manage their entire business processes. There is no need to worry about hardware / software maintenance and huge capital expenditure on IT infrastructure. All they need to do is use LuitBiz to manage their entire business processes centrally over the Internet. As LuitBiz can be customized to meet clientís business processes, they need not change the way they do business. Luit Infotech modifies LuitBiz to meet their customer requirements. LuitBiz is completely web based and extremely easy to use. Users can start off with LuitBiz with hardly any training.

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