

If You Focus on Products You’ll Miss the Cloud

Lori MacVittie, 2009-25-08

The real power behind cloud is processes, and those don’t come out of a box

vmworld 2009

August 31-September 3
The Moscone Center, San Francisco

VMworld, in case you’ve been out of touch, is approaching fairly quickly. As with any trade show/conference there’s likely to be a lot of announcements about this and that and oh, of course, *that* too. What is interesting about cloud computing and virtualization is that most of the really exciting announcements are not going to be about new products or new features.

You heard me, they *aren’t* going to be about new products or features.

The foundations for cloud computing have already been laid; the products required to build a [scalable, on-demand cloud computing](#) architecture exist, today, out there in the “marketplace.” What *doesn’t* exist is the glue – the integration, the collaboration – between the disparate components that make up a scalable, on-demand cloud computing architecture.

And it probably won’t *ever* exist, so don’t hold your breath. For the same reason business process re-engineering failed and business process management (BPM) systems were created, so too would “canned” cloud products that require adherence to a particular set of operational processes fail.

CLOUD IS ABOUT PROCESS, NOT PRODUCT

That’s because [what makes a cloud “cloud” are the processes](#) that *drive* the infrastructure to be able to scale, on-demand and adjust, in real-time, to a variety of conditions in the network, the applications, and the environment (a.k.a. “context”). Those processes are, necessarily, unique to each and every data center whether it belongs to a provider or a data center. Like enterprise application integration (EAI) in the past and business process management (BPM) and enterprise service bus (ESB) there is no holy grail, no ultimate product that provides this in a turn-key fashion because, well, it *can’t*. Not without professional services and as soon as you bring them into the picture then the solution is no longer turn-key.

Like application integration – whether traditional or [SOA](#) – the integration of the network infrastructure with the application infrastructure requires the codification of unique processes that incorporate business and organizational specific variables that cannot be accounted for by vendors. This is, in essence, the whole purpose for a dynamic infrastructure – an adaptable, [programmable](#), and collaborative framework provided by application and network infrastructure vendors alike that allow the complete solution to come into being. What providers and organizations need is a foundation for implementing those processes, not canned operational processes that may or may not make sense with a given IT organization.





Cloud isn't a product and in many cases it doesn't require *new* products. Oh, vendors can slap "cloud enabled" stickers on their products and call them new if that will make you feel better but in almost all cases there isn't a need for new products or even new functionality. What's exciting and innovative is the way in which existing products like virtual machines and unified application delivery platforms and IPAM and storage are being integrated to enable the functionality that thus far we've only written about as if they're some kind of science fiction fantasy dreamed up by Asimov or Sagan or Heinlein.

That's why if you watch the excitement building around [VMworld](#) and cloud in general it's not about *products* it's about *capabilities*. It's about [integration and collaboration](#). It's about leveraging the intelligence and collaborative features of infrastructure along with virtualization solutions and mashing them up in new ways to automate processes. That's what makes cloud "cloud", and where the biggest value and benefits come from: the automation of operational processes enabled by a dynamic infrastructure and virtualization technology.

If you're keeping an eye on cloud and virtualization and only watching for turn-key, packaged solutions you're going to miss the cloud.



- [Putting the Cloud Before the Horse](#)
- [Virtual Machine Density as the New Measure of IT Efficiency](#)
- [We Don't Know What Cloud Is But What We're Doing It](#)
- [How do you get the benefits of shared resources in a private cloud?](#)
- [Virtual Machine Density as the New Measure of IT Efficiency](#)
- [Your Cloud is Not a Precious Snowflake \(But it Could Be\)](#)
- [Cloud computing is not Burger King. You can't have it your way. Yet.](#)
- [The Revolution Continues: Let Them Eat Cloud](#)

F5 Networks, Inc. | 401 Elliot Avenue West, Seattle, WA 98119 | 888-882-4447 | [f5.com](#)

F5 Networks, Inc.
Corporate Headquarters
info@f5.com

F5 Networks
Asia-Pacific
apacinfo@f5.com

F5 Networks Ltd.
Europe/Middle-East/Africa
emeainfo@f5.com

F5 Networks
Japan K.K.
f5j-info@f5.com