Pay No Attention to the Infrastructure Behind the Cloudy Curtain

Lori MacVittie, 2010-26-02

What is needed to customize the cloud is a pair of data center ruby slippers called Infrastructure 2.0.

Frank Gens of IDC discussed the "New IDC IT Cloud Services Survey: Top Benefits and Challenges" in his blog and what is not surprising is that security continues to top the challenges associated with cloud services. What may be surprising to some is the increasing focus on customization. It shouldn't be. As customers continue to push at the boundaries of the cloud computing model they will inevitably find it unable to meet some need they have, such as customization.

See, when IT professionals said they didn't want to worry about infrastructure that didn't necessarily mean they didn't *care* about the infrastructure. What they meant was they didn't want to bear the operational and capital expenses associated with infrastructure if they didn't have to. That's a very different story than not caring about the infrastructure or about their ability to provision it, manage it, and ultimately control it. Applications are never deployed in a vacuum, after all, and part of the way in which they are secured, optimized, and made highly available is through its supporting infrastructure. Many of those options are simply no longer available in "the cloud", and this is likely to be a bullet point in the "against cloud" column for many organizations who employ a more infrastructure inclusive strategy to delivering applications.

We could easily argue that "lack of interoperability standards" (cited higher on the challenge scale at 80.2% of respondents **concerned** to **very concerned** about standards in the survey) is directly related to this lack of customization capability (76% cited this as a concern). After all, interoperability standards across infrastructure of similar ilk would, ostensibly, make it easier for cloud computing providers to offer the infrastructure services required to customize the environment.

Infrastructure 2.0 is the means by which many of these concerns will eventually be addressed.