

Separating Hype and Cloud Service Integration

Where's the Beef?

by Richard Whitehead

So far, 2011 feels a lot like 1984. Remember 1984? Just in case your memory isn't what it used to be, I'll sum up a couple of key media events.

Two incredible TV ads that year had everyone talking. The first was an Orwellian 60-second spot about a radically new personal computer that was going to change the world by knocking off Big Brother (or was it Big Iron?). Many would argue that the Apple Macintosh did just that, although apparently corporate users didn't get the message, as the Mac's success was largely limited to home offices and graphics departments.

It's amazing how many people remember the "1984" spot 27 years later—especially given that it only ran once on network TV, during the third quarter of Super Bowl XVIII. It was heavily hyped—almost as much as cloud computing is today.

There was another wildly popular TV commercial that year that still has a relevant message. Remember when an ancient little actress named Clara Peller gazed at a tiny hamburger patty on a huge bun and shouted "Where's the Beef?"

The themes of those two epic commercials are still reverberating today in IT conversations. How many times have you heard "Cloud computing will revolutionize the world and forever change information technology!" or "Where's the beef when it comes to cloud integration?"

> Beefing Up Workload Intelligence

In 2011 and beyond, successful service delivery for both private and public clouds will be determined by how well cloud-based services are integrated with the tools you use to build, secure, manage and measure workloads. I'm happy to report that Novell WorkloadIQ solutions are delivering necessary workload intelligence, integration and service optimization to allow the safe, compliant adoption of on-demand cloud computing.

> Building Intelligent Workloads

Before you can safely outsource a workload, it needs to be infused with intelligence. The process of building intelligent workloads is getting easier by the day. But for those who need a little assistance, an ecosystem of capable consultants who are familiar with [Novell WorkloadIQ](#) integration capabilities is rapidly emerging to help out.

For cloud computing to gain mainstream adoption, intelligent capabilities must become part of the workload—whether the workload executes on a physical, virtual or cloud-based infrastructure. Properly designed workloads are secure, with built-in safeguards that move with the workload between environments. They also ensure compliance by recognizing when they contain confidential information and following appropriate security protocols and processing requirements. And they include intelligence to recognize when their computing resources are at capacity, allowing automatic performance optimization through the addition of alternate processing capacity.

I've blogged in the past about how [SUSE Studio](#) makes short work of creating intelligent workloads, otherwise known as software appliances. It helps you create images that are optimized to deploy on Amazon's Elastic Compute Cloud (EC2). You can easily infuse the workload with built-in intelligence to run within Amazon EC2 and even specify the operating system. For example, choosing execution on SUSE Linux Enterprise Server (SLES) will ensure that your workload receives automatic maintenance and access to security updates, patches and bug fixes.

> **Why Securing Workloads Equals Job Security**

Whether you want to admit it or not, IT services in your company are being outsourced to cloud service providers. This trend will only continue to accelerate. I covered this topic in a previous Connection Magazine Column, "[Shine Some Light on Shadow IT.](#)" In short, that column dealt with the fact that business units are doing an end-run around IT and outsourcing what used to be IT-supplied services.

And, just in case you're short on time, here's that column's takeaway message: IT insecurity about cloud service ownership shouldn't result in a lack of corporate security. Corporate IT can help itself and help business unit owners monitor and measure business service performance by infusing workloads with identity and security capabilities, such as those found in [Novell Identity Manager 4](#), and by adopting intelligent tools that take advantage of these integrated capabilities. In other words, corporate IT can and will remain relevant and add value during the cloud computing evolution.

One early adopter of WorkloadIQ solutions is Affiliated Computer Services (ACS), a Xerox company specializing in business process outsourcing and IT services and solutions delivered over the cloud. ACS understands the power of identity-driven intelligent workload management in cloud computing—not only in securing customer data but in delivering operational efficiencies. That's why this IT services leader aggressively integrated WorkloadIQ identity and security capabilities into every aspect of its infrastructure. You may want to check out the [ACS video](#). Why? Although it's delivered from the service provider's perspective, the video offers great insights into how corporate IT can benefit from offering intelligent services. Whether you are going to partner with or compete with service providers (and hopefully by now, you realize you'll be doing both), you'd be well advised to see what they're doing right.

> **Manage Cloud Services Not Hypervisors, OSe's or Hardware Platforms**

Remember all the noise over the past couple of years about which hypervisor you should be running? It seemed every virtualization vendor offered its own version, leaving many customers wondering which ones to put in their data centers and on their IT roadmaps.

Toward the end of last year I predicted that, in 2011, talk of hypervisors would become irrelevant and the conversation would be more about service delivery than underlying technology. Why? For starters, Novell eliminated hypervisor handwringing by agreeing to support all the major players. In fact, [Novell Cloud Manager](#) lets IT create and manage private clouds that support all leading hypervisors—as well as leading operating systems and hardware platforms. Want to run Xen? VMware ESX or vSphere? Microsoft Hyper-V? Pick your favorite—or run them all side by side if you so choose.

> How Does IT Measure Up?

What will be your role in this cloud-computing paradigm? It depends on your ability to measure the right metrics. Having meaningful business service level performance monitoring and alerting is far more valuable than compiling detailed system performance metrics about your cloud providers.

Since I mentioned Amazon EC2 earlier, let's stick with that example. What about monitoring your workload's execution on EC2? Today, [Novell Operations Center](#) receives basic performance metrics directly from Amazon to provide a view of current network, CPU and other performance indicators—with more on the way, as Amazon exposes rich event information to WorkloadIQ solutions. Novell Operations Center also gives you the ability to automate the execution of synthetic tests—such as how long it takes to open a trouble ticket or run a Visa charge—and tie these tests together to determine whether service levels are being met.

While these are a good start, you need to be able to measure and manage business service delivery. And Novell Operations Center offers a capability that should appeal to every CIO: Keeping tabs on how much your development team is spending on outsourced data processing. After all, it's not like the unlimited price plans that mobile phone carriers are pitching to your kids these days. Novell Operations Center lets you easily create dashboards to see how many of these EC2 workload instances are being spun up.

These are just a few cloud-service integration examples that spring to mind. They are the cloud-computing beef, if you will. Novell continues to beef up the level of cloud integration within its WorkloadIQ products and services. And I can assure you, recent merger activities are only accelerating WorkloadIQ development efforts.

For more examples of how WorkloadIQ solutions enable intelligent workload management, check out my blog at [WorkloadIQ.com](#).

—Richard

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