Four Reasons to Implement a Hybrid Cloud

Use Cases for Today's Business Environment

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Rapidly growing amounts of data and new business applications require increased bandwidth, storage, server CPU cycles and other key performance factors to succeed. Organizations are turning to the cloud due to budgetary and staffing constraints to meet their IT demands for application availability. However, for some companies, a complete shift to the cloud isn't practical. That's why many are turning to hybrid cloud environments. They're able to keep some workloads on-premise and deliver required computing power to the business, enabling their IT staff to deliver on new initiatives.

There is a strong case to be made for the hybrid cloud: being able to keep some workloads and data on-premises, buying time to prepare for a full cloud migration and simply extending the organization's computing resources to meet internal and external demand for storage and application services. Some companies choose a hybrid cloud environment to keep workloads on-premises. Either they have security and privacy concerns, regulatory concerns or internal policies and procedures that do not allow for a full cloud deployment. By choosing a hybrid solution, they're able to extend computing power while still meeting these requirements.

Other companies are using a hybrid environment to buy time as they prepare for a full cloud migration. On-premises applications need to be readied for cloud deployment, which takes time and resources that some organizations can't spare immediately. Finally, some companies are simply looking for more resources for their applications. Often, these organizations have small IT departments that need to prioritize their focus, and the hybrid cloud allows the team to focus on strategic applications instead of putting out fires.

The hybrid cloud has many uses for a variety of industries and applications. Here are four ways the hybrid cloud can transform your business.

1. Increase Data Center Capacity While Reducing Costs and Satisfying Compliance Requirements

Highly regulated companies are very cautious about putting anything in the cloud due to stringent compliance requirements. Healthcare, life sciences, financial services and insurance companies need to protect patient, customer or consumer data. They process large amounts of data for analysis purposes and need computing power for that, but they also face steep government fines in the event of a data breach, posing a risk to the business. Because these regulated industries are very concerned about data privacy, and industry and government regulations, they have been hesitant to leverage cloud computing.

Hybrid cloud deployment allows companies in highly regulated industries to take advantage of scalable computing power to meet workload demands in a pay-as-you go model, while still keeping data secure. This turns computing resources into an operating expense versus a capital expense. It also enables business agility, allowing these companies to quickly run new applications without new infrastructure. Additionally, these companies are able to extend their capabilities, deploying and integrating new web-based applications with other cloud-native applications to provide anytime, anywhere connectivity to employees, customers, patients, medical professionals or other user types.

2. Modernize Legacy Applications Like ERP, CRM and Custom-Built Business Apps

Companies with server-based ERP, CRM, manufacturing, distribution or custom line-of-business apps want to extend them to the cloud to enable easy access for remote employees and partners. However, in many organizations, these legacy applications are server-based and aging, and they are often not great candidates to move to the cloud because of architectural, security or performance reasons. These legacy applications need to be enhanced to mitigate the increased maintenance costs that come with placing new demands on applications not designed for today's connected world.

Using a hybrid cloud model, companies reap the benefits of cloud-native capabilities like scalability, mobile access to applications and the ability to connect with other cloud-native applications. They are also able to avoid purchasing expensive "rip and replace" on-premises solutions.

3. Reduce Disaster Recovery and High Availability Services Costs

Here is an all-too common scenario: an organization has their production environment either on-premises, hosted in a colocation facility or in a hosted private cloud. They are paying a service provider for disaster recovery services or they invested in an expensive high availability system that required maintenance payments. However, most likely, because of the high cost of disaster recovery and high availability services, they are only using backup services, leaving them vulnerable in the event of a system outage, natural disaster or other similar event.

Using a hybrid cloud model, organizations can eliminate the need to spend money on dedicated facilities and infrastructure for disaster recovery and high availability services that would remain idle most of the time. Hardware currently dedicated to backups can then be used for another IT function, which saves on disaster recovery costs and non-hardware provisioning.

4. Transform the Data Center to an Automated, Self-Serve Function

A hybrid cloud model can allow end users to provision their own resources and leverage the benefits of the cloud, making it user-friendly and freeing up IT in the process.

Self-service in the cloud offers numerous benefits, ranging from cost reductions and transparency to faster execution of customer demands and an enhanced user experience. The users can request applications without involving IT, including SAP®, Salesforce® and other business applications that are all provisioned and integrated in a cloud platform. A hybrid cloud can be used to support on-premises collaborative resource servers like SharePoint®.

Key Takeaways

There are many scenarios where it makes good business sense to move to the cloud, or to implement a hybrid cloud solution, four of which were presented in this paper:

1. Access to scalable, low-cost, pay-as-you-go computing resources without having to invest in new servers.

2. Extend the capabilities of legacy systems with emerging technologies and support business processes.

3. Realize significant cost-savings and provide application availability for the organization.

4. By providing end user self-service functions, traditional IT data centers can transition to an "IT as a Service" operation that makes users more productive.

Tips to Get Started

When you're getting started on your project, consider the following tips to identify the best partner for your business:

- Choose a trusted advisor for moving your legacy applications, storage or backup to the cloud.

- Once you're up and running, you'll also need to have confidence in your support team for the hybrid cloud environment, knowing that you'll be covered 24/7/365 by live human assistance that's just a phone call away.

- You have options with providers: they can complement your existing IT staff, or manage your entire IT function.

- Seek out a cloud service partner that has flexible solutions as well as geographically diverse data centers that will let you connect databases to the cloud with low latency.

- You'll also want to look for a provider that offers the choice of a hosted private cloud, virtual private cloud and a broad range of services.

- From there, you'll work with your provider to build out your environment: deciding which legacy applications to move, how to interconnect them with cloud resources or creating infrastructure and processes to support disaster recovery and high availability.

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