Consulting Practice

Cloud Computing Applications in Thailand: An Overview

With the adoption of cloud computing and on-demand application delivery models, Thai companies can now enjoy the benefits offered by global cloud service providers

A New Delivery Model

A cloud-based application delivery, also known as Software-as-a-Service (SaaS), is a model in which an application is hosted by a vendor and provided to customers across the Internet. No application downloading or installation is required. Users simply access the system through a web browser, paying only a periodic usage fee.

Recently, Gartner Inc. predicted that by 2011, 25 percent of new business software will be delivered by SaaS. Moreover, the research firm put cloud computing as the number one technology for 2010 (see below).

The SaaS model of software delivery has several advantages. These benefits include:

- Lower upfront and ongoing costs
- Faster implementation and time-to-value
- Reduced IT involvement; no integration and maintenance of disparate products

An offering of this sort creates an entirely new playing field by reducing prices, introducing a new pricing model, and creating an entirely new market.

Three Layers of Cloud Services

There are three major categories of cloud computing services: software, platform, and infrastructure.

At the highest level, we have Software-as-a-Service (SaaS). SaaS includes a range of on-demand applications that are licensed as services to be used by customers through the Internet. Common examples of such services are Customer Relationship Management offered by Salesforce.com, Business Intelligence offered by SAS, Human Resources

offered by Oracle, and Productivity and Collaboration Suite offered by Google.

Next, we have Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS). PaaS is a cost-effective method for application development and deployment. The PaaS model provides all the necessary facilities to support the development and delivery of Web applications and services on the Internet. Examples of such services are Google App Engine and Microsoft Windows Azure.

Last, at the lowest level, we have Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS). IaaS enables the delivery of computer infrastructures as a service via the Internet. Instead of purchasing physical servers, software, data center storages, or network equipments, customers buy these resources as fully outsourced services. The most famous example of IaaS is Amazon Web Services, which allows companies to create their own Virtual Private Cloud.

Applications by Industry

Over the past several years, companies of all sizes in Thailand have embraced and enjoyed the benefits offered by the cloud computing model. The following are brief examples of how companies have applied cloud computing services to their industries.

Crude Petroleum & Natural Gas
Due to its project-based nature, the client realizes great benefits from using Google Apps. Google Docs is used for internal work collaboration and sharing, while Google Sites serves as an information portal for each project. Moreover, the company uses Google Maps to keep track of its resources (such as temperature, location, flow level, etc.), which are scattered all over the country.

Sugar & Confectionery Products
Similar to the previous case, a large commodity producer is also able to enjoy the benefits offered by Google Apps suite. However, the initial key drivers for its shift are cost and security. In terms of cost, the company is trying to find an alternative to its existing Office Suite vendor, which is demanding expensive licensing fees for a new release. In terms of security, due to the recent turmoil in Bangkok, in which downtown offices were set on fire, the company wishes to have better security for its IT resources. Cloud computing mitigates this risk by storing data across continents with multiple backup sites for disaster recovery. Should a similar unfortunate event occur again, the company's employees would be able to work collaboratively from their homes, accessing shared data stored safely in the cloud.

Specialized Consulting
A boutique, international consultancy firm with operations in Thailand adopts cloud services for two main reasons: portability and scalability. As typical of any consultancy, its members are always on the move. With cloud solutions, members can access and update information from any location using any device, including smart phones. The data displayed are real-time, ensuring that members working on the same project from different countries are always getting the most up-to-date information. As for scalability, cloud computing is able to accommodate the client's constant global expansion of its businesses.

Financial Services
Financial institutions, small and large, can benefit from cloud services. One client is currently using Salesforce.com CRM in its telesales department. Besides gaining better customer visibility, sales representatives take advantage of Salesforce.com Sales Script

feature to effectively offer products. The automated script displays messages, tips, reminders, and answers according to the customer's response. Furthermore, the CRM system offers complete automation of work flow approval, eliminating human errors arising from manual processes and allowing a paperless operation.

Another institution has recently deployed the cloud CRM system to branches nationwide. Cloud computing makes possible real-time dashboards which provide valuable business intelligence for managers to monitor and improve their branch performance.

Raw Material Processing
The Thai office of a foreign multinational firm has recently developed applications on the Force.com platform (PaaS) for internal use. It is a KPI tracking system that displays various metrics, pertaining to the success of yearly targets. The company plans to roll out the applications globally via the cloud.

Beverages
To support its global sales operation, the number one Thai beverage firm is amongst the pioneer users of CRM cloud services in Thailand. The cloud-based CRM supports their global sales operations, from sales activity management to competitor tracking, and facilitates easy collaboration among its offices worldwide.

Electronic & Other Electrical Equipment
With a large network of sales representatives scattered all over Thailand, the multinational company uses Salesforce.com CRM with extensional capabilities to manage its sales workforce effectively. By integrating Google Maps with the CRM system, the company can track its sales staffs' real-time movements and activities via information sent by their mobile

phones. Furthermore, through the mobile application, salespersons can easily update the status of deals from anywhere at any time, giving much better visibility to management and the rest of the team.

Summary

The cases mentioned here are just some demonstrations of current applications of cloud computing in Thailand. The concept is nothing new and companies in Thailand are now enjoying the benefits offered by global cloud service providers. Cloud computing has been making headlines in both local and global newspapers for the past several years. Those who are quick to embrace it will likely gain a cutting edge advantage over their competitors.

Appendix

About CRM & Cloud Consulting (CRM-C)
At CRM-C, our mission is to assist your business in successfully migrating to the Cloud. Our experience has taught us that a successful migration to the cloud requires more than just IT solutions. A deep understanding of other issues, such as people and process, must be aligned with the system in order to realize the full potential of the Cloud. Therefore, our team comprises of experts from diverse fields with insights into local businesses.

We offer on-demand, automated, and integrated solutions to manage your business and your customer's growing needs. Our expertise currently lies in Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Office Collaboration Suite tools. However, as advocates of cloud computing, we are continuously expanding our offerings to meet our clients' needs.

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