Rēgulvar

Cloud computing:
not all clouds bring bad news

Clouds, and the rain that tends to follow, are rarely popular. However, *the cloud,* also known as *cloud computing,* is in a different category given that the wind of change it brings about is steering information technology (IT) in a promising direction.

The current state of IT

Since the birth of the first computers in about 1945, computer science and IT have enjoyed quick and exponential growth and we have all shared in the multiple benefits. Today, this momentum has slowed with regard to equipment, primarily due to the costs involved. The global IT infrastructure is beginning to run out of steam and yet our demands show no signs of letting up. So the next question becomes: what direction will IT take to pursue its evolution? According to many specialists, the answer is in pooling resources to increase the power of our IT systems. This solution is considered feasible due to enhanced network performance and globalization. It is also supported by a growing desire for mobility, and the recent popularity of smart phones and tablets—devices that would not be able to support heavy applications, for instance Google Maps, without the assistance of remote services.

The cloud

The cloud derives its name from the cloud used to depict the Internet on IT and engineering system plans. The basic principle involves using the memory and processing ability of several servers and computers located throughout the world and accessing services through networks such as the Internet or intranets. Whether it has to do with data warehousing, equipment rentals or the use of operating systems and software programs, everything is carried out in the cloud; the infrastructure and applications are no longer located with the final user. The consumer only needs a device—a computer, tablet or smart phone—and access to the Internet to take advantage of a range of services.

Did you know?

If you used your tablet to access Google Maps today, shared information through Dropbox, or watched a movie using Netflix, you are already enjoying the benefits of the cloud.

The advantages of cloud computing

There are three main advantages that set cloud computing apart from traditional computing. First, it supports the notion of **pay-per-use**. For instance, instead of buying a software program or an operating system, customers can "rent" one by the hour from a provider, who is responsible for updates and licence management. ▶

Secondly, the **scalability** that cloud computing provides means companies and individuals use only the resources they need, when they need them, without having to purchase new equipment or leave unnecessary equipment dormant. Customers will need fewer computers and be able to reduce maintenance costs without impacting operations.

Finally, the services are fully **managed by providers**, which means that the providers themselves will ensure the proper functioning of their installations in every regard, including safety. According to many sources, cloud computing is highly reliable given that the providers have the means to implement sophisticated protection systems and they monitor them closely to maintain their reputation.

Cloud computing and building automation

According to marketing research company IMS Research (www.imsresearch.com), the building automation field will increasingly turn to cloud computing, primarily for using software as a service (SaaS) and analyzing management data. There is nothing surprising about this prediction, given the cloud's many advantages for building owners and managers, particularly with regard to large building inventories, campuses or international companies. What's more, with the arrival of open protocols such as BACnet and Lonworks, it is becoming much easier to connect building automation systems with the outside world.

In a bid to offer cutting-edge services, Regulvar is therefore preparing to propose cloud-based solutions. Regulvar Inc. President Marc Dugré notes that the first step will be to transfer building management software away from work stations. Wherever they may be in the world, customers will access the Internet using a computer, tablet or smart phone in order to intervene in real time on the HVAC or lighting devices in their buildings. They will no longer have to worry about software or equipment upgrades because Regulvar will provide the applications and maintain the infrastructure.

Regulvar also plans on offering analytical services designed to target problems or issues and establish long-term management strategies. Information from a variety of sources will be analyzed in real time, which will contribute to the ongoing improvement of building performance by making it possible to make comparisons and quickly obtain an accurate picture of the situation. By using the cloud, customers can take advantage of this feature without increasing the number of their computers.

Finally, the maintenance of building automation systems will also be affected by cloud computing. Regulvar would like to offer electromechanical analysis services that customers will use, for instance, to understand the condition of various devices or their operating duration. This will make repairs and maintenance planning more efficient, because they will be carried out after a given number of operating hours rather than on approximate dates.

> "Customers want a specific result, whether it comes from a machine under their desk or from machines that are located elsewhere."
> Stéphane Lorrain, Regulvar IT Coordinator

When answering service calls, Regulvar technicians will have real-time access to building reports and databases. They will therefore be able to view the plans and features of the devices they are working on, order the required parts, fill out the documents and ask the customer to sign the tablet directly.

These are promising solutions, which is why Regulvar would like to develop them in the coming years and offer them to their customers, who have come to rely on the Company's expertise. For many companies, having their head in the clouds will no longer be a disadvantage.

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UPCOMING TRAINING

Laval (French):

ORCAVIEW 3.33
intermediate level
September 10•11

ORCAVIEW 3.33
advanced level
September 12•13

GCL + PROGRAMMING
September 17•18•19

CREATION OF GRAPHIC INTERFACE
September 26•27

Ottawa (English):

ORCAVIEW 3.33
intermediate level
October 9•10

ORCAVIEW 3.33
advanced level
October 11•12

GCL + PROGRAMMING
October 15•16•17

CREATION OF GRAPHIC INTERFACE
Depending on enrollment

For more information,
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