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We know what the cloud is – but is it the technology equivalent of global warming?

The term cloud computing is being used more frequently in white papers and articles written by groups such as Gartner, Yankee, and Tier 1 research. Although somewhat still elusive, this term refers more and more to allowing application users within a business to focus on being a doctor, lawyer, accountant, or (insert profession) as the IT systems which support those applications fade into the ether, at least from their perspective.

IT systems fading into the ether relative to the application users as well as the application managers is the march towards cloud computing. The theory of cloud computing allows traditional IT systems' managers to focus on what they were hired to do: increase application performance and availability while continually driving TCO downward. Although it sounds like magic, it is soundly rooted in the basic economic principles of economies of scale and specialization.

Today IT application managers maintain and support data centers at their place of business which are not adequately designed for power, cooling, security, or network availability. The idea of cloud computing suggests there is a more elegant design which eliminates the customer's data center by allowing the applications that historically relied on this infrastructure to sit in a IT systems provider's cloud or much larger shared infrastructure.

Creating a shared environment allows multiple customers to use resources such as VM, networking, backups, and security that would otherwise be underutilized, creating higher efficiencies in a macro (i.e. service provider) as well as micro (i.e. customer) perspective.

Arcus' collocation and managed hosting data center partners such as Peak 10, Terremark, Sungard, and Rackspace have developed shared technologies such as Virtualization and IP centric services based on this premise. This allows customers to convert capital budgets for IT infrastructure into monthly expenses while creating more time to make their user base more productive.

How would you like to see firsthand how these "Cloud Providers" stack up against one another in an industry first service provider "shootout"? Arcus is planning this very event to be held in late spring 2010. Please let us know if you would like to be included in this very competitive and revealing cloud computing event at info@arcuscloud.com.

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