



'CIOs reluctant to sign own death warrants'

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CIOs are reluctant to sign their own death warrants by trusting cloud computing, according to Justin Fielder, CTO of EasyNet Global Services.

Speaking on a panel at a NetEvents conference in Barcelona last week, Fielder contrasted the risks and benefits of using public and private versions of cloud-computing strategies.

"If it is a private cloud, you will get some of the economic benefits, primarily through virtualisation," he said. "We have gone from 1,000 servers to 200 servers, but it's amazing how quickly you get back to 1,000 because of the demands of the business. So I'm never quite sure whether we really did save some money over a three-year plan.

"But I think if it is a private cloud, at least you know where it is," he added. "And therefore, you can get that implicit trust - but it takes time. It takes time for a CIO to start writing [what is] potentially his death warrant

because if it goes wrong, you stop the business, whereas previously, if stuff went wrong, it didn't stop the business. If you put your ERP into the cloud and it stops, your business stops."

Raul Chico, head of IT and PS practices, BT Spain, agreed that trust was vital to the uptake of cloud computing.

"I think that the main inhibitor has to do with trust. People don't want to lose control and I think that the same goes for the cloud industries in the early stages."

Despite the perceived risks of cloud computing, more than 50% of businesses are undertaking some kind of cloud-computing pilot schemes, according to Sean Hackett, research director, Cloudscape, at the 451 Group. The move is being driven by cost concerns, the desire for flexible and scalable computing resources, and a need to deploy new services more quickly.

"I think there are lots of things that are driving this," said David Howorth, regional vice president of cloud and IT services, Verizon Business. "It's really the consumerisation of IT. Employees today have better IT than the corporate. I think that is driving expectations in the business as to what IT should be doing."

Fielder argued that the practicalities of cloud computing, such as where data is actually stored and the networking resources needed to transport it to its users, will also undermine its uptake.

"The problem is if you do the simple one which is media exchange servers, you need LAN speed in the WAN because people email stuff around themselves," he said.

David Hill VP EMEA, Spirent Communications, said "Cloud computing has been around for a long time. I go back to the X25 days, to me, that was a cloud.

"I think virtualisation is a huge difference. I think it is being driven by cost reduction, competitiveness, and so on. And I think there is a huge challenge out there. People say 'I don't actually know what I want. I just know that I got to reduce my cost to remain competitive in the market space'. So I think those big changes are taking place."

<http://eandt.theiet.org/news/2011/feb/death-cloud.cfm>