

## Cloud computing a fundamental change, says industry visionary

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Cloud computing is a fundamental change unlike any other, according to Brocade's chief marketing officer John McHugh. McHugh was giving the opening keynote speech at NetEvents' conference in Langkawi, Malaysia, in front of press and analysts from the Asia Pacific region.



McHugh said that in 20 years time, computing will have changed as much as manufacturing has changed over the last 20 years. He said: "Who would have imagined 20 years ago that almost all technology manufacturing would have been moved to huge factories in China, to companies such as Selectronics and Foxconn?"

McHugh talked about the impetus behind the adoption of cloud computing. A key driver is the desire to buy computing like a utility, on a per-transaction basis, so that the hardware becomes irrelevant. The roadmap goes from server virtualisation, to distributed virtualisation, then private, hybrid, and then "fully transactable" public cloud as the end point, he said

"A classic early phase of this process is to deliver a cloud in a box," he said, referring to all-in-one offerings from vendors such as HP and Cisco. "It's a step back from an IT standpoint, and involves restrictive architectures — you have to use this or that storage and OS. It simplifies deployment but cloud deployers won't want that model. They are gap fillers, transient products."

McHugh said that a network fabric was the next step towards the cloud. Brocade sells storage network fabrics, which are flat, highly-connected, non-hierarchical systems.

"The next step is to move to fabrics with high performance, service provider networks that can connect datacentres together, globally," he said. "Meshing architectures allows for example Openflow to create self-learning networks.

"Every datacentre wants to be a service provider, and every SP wants to be a datacentre. It means SPs are not a route for one place to another but a destination."

For McHugh, one of the biggest challenges is improving cloud security. “It’s the stickiest challenge,” he said. “Open is critical, along with security, which needs a guarantee that shared resources are safe and secure.”

McHugh said the solution was governmental regulation, as this would mean companies could trust service providers as security failures could incur legal penalties. “Government needs to support the idea that recompense can be had if services are not delivered,” McHugh said. “Better security will enable the move from a private to a distributed model.”

Data sovereignty was another key issue that, without legislation, would hinder cloud adoption.

“Do people care where their data is being hosted? Yes, data sovereignty is important,” he said. “Most companies are at the private cloud stage now, so they define both ends and understand what’s in the [datacentre] cage. People only don’t care where the data is unless the data doesn’t matter, and it will be that way until regulatory changes occur.”

What cloud also needs is a unified standard, according to McHugh, along with more innovation.

“Innovation drives new business models that drive up consumption. What dies is old technologies and companies that fixate on how things are done rather than the outcome,” he said.

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