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Cloud Wars Define Next Revolution in Cloud Computing

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Experts in a panel discussion titled "Who will win the cloud wars: Google, Amazon, Microsoft, IBM -- or traditional carriers?" agreed that Google, Amazon and Microsoft are locked in a battle to define the next revolution in cloud computing. Cloud, they added, will continue to evolve over the next few years and demand will surge, pushing most companies to move to the cloud in one way or the other.

The debate, chaired by Mike Sapien, principal analyst, Enterprise Services at Ovum, took place at the NetEvents Global Press and Analyst IOT and Cloud Innovation Summit held in California, US last week.

Michael Segal, director of marketing at NetScout Systems, said digital transformation is disrupting many markets today and this contributes to the cloud wars between the leading providers.

"Amazon Web Services (AWS) has over one million cloud enterprise  customers, making more than \$6 billion US dollars in revenue annually. Microsoft Azure, which is now leading the platform as a service market, is a serious challenger to AWS. And then there is IBM, with their strategy of cloud solutions, they are also headed towards challenging Amazon.

The question is what will happen when digital transformation accelerates this transition and creates disruption opportunities?" asked Segal.

Pravin Mahajan, director of product and corporate marketing at Infinera, believes there is an interesting dynamic brought about by Google, Amazon, Microsoft cloud services in that they have encouraged the smaller traditional players to evolve and invest more in data center assets in order to stay in the game.

"The clear winners in the cloud wars -- Amazon, Microsoft Azure and Google, have indicated pretty much the same market share for the past three or four years, once they reach a certain scale, it's hard to see them getting dislodged from the top three positions. Traditional players are losing revenue of around US\$12 to 13 billion annually because there are upcoming digitized services that use them as dumping sites and they're not getting revenue share.

"Traditional players have to overcome this is by introducing new digital services, integrating compelling content and virtualizing a lot of their network infrastructure because they have access to many subscribers. There has to be some kind of cooperation between the major players and the traditional players. It will be interesting to see what happens in this space in future," Mahajan asserted.

Some of the leading cloud providers are providing true platform as a service and that means they're several years ahead, he added.

Areg Alimian, senior director of Solutions Marketing at Ixia, explained the silver lining of cloud solutions is all about the application experience. As businesses move their workloads

to cloud infrastructure, they have certain expectations to deliver service-level agreements, a good quality experience, while ensuring that their services run reliably and securely.

"If you look at Amazon Web Services, Google and Azure single machines, their BM is statistically less reliable than a top-tier on premises virtual machine, which is deployable by the data center. Assuming that because you're moving onto Amazon you'll get the best service, is a misconception.

"Most organizations are still not comfortable to transfer all their data onto public cloud. This leads to inherent complexities such as data that still remains on premises, while at the same time having other applications in the public cloud. This means at any given time most organizations don't know where their data is held," he pointed out.

As a business you need to build reliability by creating redundancy in your applications by using the elasticity of the cloud to adhering to service requirements for your particular application, noted Alimian.

In conclusion, the panelists agreed that cloud service providers need to ensure they have pervasive end-to-end visibility from their virtual data center to their office premises, and from their office premises to the private cloud, and ultimately to their public cloud infrastructure at all times.

The winning cloud service, they emphasized, will be the one which provides the highest level of reliability and remains secure at the same time.