

WHITE PAPER



INTEROP 2011: TRENDS THAT ARE CHANGING IT

June 2011

Overview

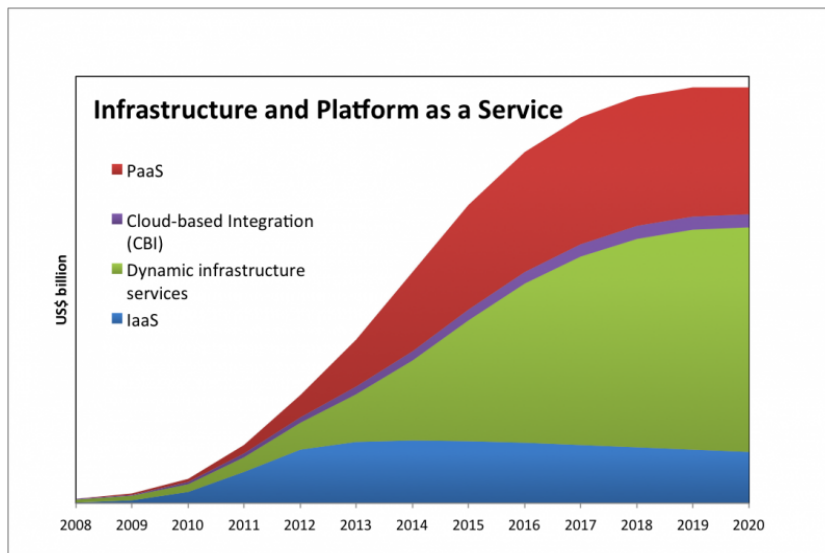
The Interop conference celebrated its 25th anniversary this year. Over that time, the conference has focused on bringing together the leaders in information technology (IT) with the goal of improving interoperability and advancing the state of the industry. This year's version, which took place May 10-12 in Las Vegas, covered a broad spectrum of topics, as shown by the various tracks that were offered:

- Cloud Computing
- Data Center
- Enterprise 2.0
- Future of Work
- Information Security
- Networking
- Service Delivery
- Storage
- Unified Communications
- Video
- Virtualization
- Wireless and Mobility

The conference has seen many changes to the IT industry, and through all the discussion in this year's tracks, two more shifts emerged that are likely to provide more disruption than there has been in recent memory—cloud computing and the consumerization of IT.

Clouds As Far As the Eye Can See

Even before Interop started, the focus on cloud computing was unmistakable. The agenda was full of sessions on various aspects of cloud, and comments on blogs and Twitter made it clear that attendees knew they would be bombarded with cloud presentations. For all the hype, it can be easy to look past



Source: Forrester

the impact cloud is having on the landscape. According to Gartner, 80% of Fortune 1000 companies will be using some cloud computing services by 2012, and Forrester predicts the worldwide cloud market revenue to be \$241 billion by 2020.

CompTIA research also finds that cloud computing is a leading priority for many organizations. According to our study *Cloud Computing: Pulling Back the Curtain* in September 2010, 64% of businesses planned to increase their

investment in cloud computing in 2011 and 72% of businesses planned to expand the types of cloud services they are using. Cloud computing shows as a priority in studies on specific verticals, and our second cloud study this year will further explore the latest trends on this hot topic.

At Interop, many of the discussions and demonstrations related to cloud concentrated on enablement. Zane Adam, general manager of Azure at Microsoft, and Alex Gray, Senior VP of Campus and Branch

Business Unit at Juniper, both showed how virtual server instances are growing even faster than physical server shipments, leading to increased virtualization demand and opportunity. Many companies demonstrated their virtualization techniques, and many others showed equipment or software for building faster, more reliable networks. These components will certainly be important as the cloud market continues to grow.

However, even greater opportunities for innovation come in servicing the new business model that comes with cloud computing. Recent outages and breaches have shown that topics such as downtime and security require careful thought and consideration when adopting a cloud model. The first order of business is to make sure that best practices are adhered to as much as possible. Cloud solutions do not magically solve problems, and maintaining sound principles while planning a solution will pay dividends.

Of course, new approaches may be required to maintain adherence to those principles. The panel that spoke on cloud during the keynote session discussed an example related to reliability. While the typical thought may be to move applications or operations out of an on-premise solution into a single cloud provider, the reality is that there will be unpredictable downtime with that provider. On the surface, adding a second cloud provider for backup may seem like a strategy that removes the cost benefit of the cloud. By negotiating proper terms with the cloud provider, though, backup usage can be billed only as needed. This mitigates the risk of downtime at the primary provider while still bringing overall cost down.

Another area of opportunity is the actual transition to a cloud architecture for individual firms. Multiple speakers at Interop emphasized that a cloud transition does not happen all at once. Instead, companies move selected systems or applications at a measured pace, carefully analyzing each move and understanding how it will affect operations. Part of this analysis is deciding between public or private cloud solutions and choosing which pieces will remain on-premise. After that, there is the matter of integrating the cloud solution with legacy systems, all while maintaining continuity of operations. This is not a trivial matter, especially for companies with no experience in hosted solutions.

In general, cloud computing is gaining momentum and giving manufacturers and service providers a new space to work in. While the logistics of cloud computing will play out in the market for several years, we will also see new thinking and new policies as cloud computing is brought to the level of quality required for enterprise use.

The Power of the User

The influence of users on IT is likely to be just as influential on shaping IT mindsets as cloud computing. However, it differs from cloud computing in a significant way: while cloud computing has some frame of reference in hosted or managed solutions, consumerization of IT is a completely new phenomenon, brought on by the power, connectivity, and usability of consumer devices and applications.

Mark Templeton, CEO of Citrix, spoke directly to this issue in his keynote. His message was “don’t fight it, feature it.” As employees are demanding to bring their own laptops, smartphones, and tablets into the workplace, IT staff should view this as an opportunity to lead the discussion on integrating these devices into the corporate network and enabling productivity gains and improved results.

The impact of end users on corporate IT is a trend that CompTIA research has observed through its studies. In our 3rd *Annual Small and Medium Business Technology Adoption Trends* study, 85% of companies surveyed said that employees used some type of personal device—computers, tablets, or cell phones—for work purposes. Of that group, only 18% said they had no concerns with personally owned devices being used for work purposes. Clearly this is a trend that is already being experienced by many companies, yet there are few policies in place that satisfy IT departments.

While the concept of featuring consumerization may be simple, the practical steps towards that goal are not. Listening to a panel of executives with some experience integrating mobile devices, it was clear that no one has discovered a foolproof method for integration, nor will there be a single method that will fit all companies. IT staff will have to rely on their corporate objectives and culture when crafting plans for integrating mobile devices.

These plans will also require new industry standards, especially in the area of security. Many standards were developed without mobile devices in mind, so forcing compliance to those standards is not necessarily a path to success. Michael Davis, CEO of Savid Technologies, made the point that mobile security requires specific mobile security tools. Vendors specializing in Mobile Device Management (MDM) are growing in number and are a useful resource for companies trying to build policies.

The other area where consumers are exerting influence on the enterprise is in social media. With 600 million people on Facebook and 300 million people on Twitter, those methods of communication and interaction are becoming accepted and even expected by employees. IT can take part in bringing these types of technologies into the enterprise and can also partner with other parts of the organization in building policy for engagement in the mainstream venues.

As consumers are enjoying more power in driving the direction of IT, speakers and panelists also pointed out the associated responsibility they have. Services, software, and hardware will all be built around the needs of the end user, so requirements and feature requests must be presented in some fashion. If end users are insisting on a solid overall experience, they also must find ways to engage with providers to build the hardware and software that will deliver that experience.

Stats and Sound Bites from Interop

- “Consumerization will force more IT change over the next 10 years than any other trend.” Mark Templeton, Citrix
- “Forty-one percent of departments always consult IT for cloud computing. What about the other 60 percent?” Steve Bandrowczak, Avaya
- “Mobility is impacted by and impacts all aspects of corporate concerns.” Philippe Withrop, Enterprise Mobility Foundation
- “By 2012, 25 percent of all employees will want to use a personal device for work.” Grant Moerschel, Waveguard
- “The consumerization of IT must be an executive concern as well as an IT issue.” Jonathan Feldman, CIO for city of Asheville

The New IT

At the close of his keynote address, Templeton described services and products delivered by “the new IT.” Within many organizations, IT is viewed as an organization that merely provides tools for getting work done or, in the worst case, as an organization that inhibits progress and must be circumvented to move work forward. A new IT would certainly be welcome by these organizations, both from the lines of business and from the IT staff who doubtless desire to be viewed as contributors to success.

The new IT will be defined by a proactive approach. With the substantial shifts brought about by cloud computing and consumerization, IT staff will have to rise to the challenge of embracing change while maintaining the integrity of the policies they have established. Those who are selling products or services to IT staff should likewise recognize this challenge and address it in their marketing.

The proactive approach will also extend into discussions with other functional areas. Increasingly, new technology comes with upside and downside. Certainly the areas of cloud computing and consumerization offer many benefits while simultaneously presenting new hazards. IT staff must become familiar with the goals of various business units so that they can bring forward the best technology for meeting those goals, and they must be able to adapt policies for the new technology—or build policies for unexplored areas—so that business risk is mitigated.

Interop showcased cloud computing and consumerization as topics that are likely to shape the IT landscape for years to come. Outside of the conference and back in the workplace, it is not the topics themselves but the way in which they change business operations that will define the future—a future delivered by the new IT.

Appendix

Links to daily blogs from Interop by CompTIA Research:

- [Day 1](#)
- [Day 2](#)
- [Day 3](#)

All CompTIA research is available at no cost to CompTIA members at www.comptia.org or by contacting the research department at research@comptia.org.



CompTIA Worldwide Headquarters
CompTIA Member Services, LLC
3500 Lacey Road, Suite 100
Downers Grove, IL 60515-5439

www.comptia.org