

Management for Professionals

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George Anderson
Mark Tempes

SAP on the Cloud

 Springer

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SAP on the Cloud

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*I think the Internet was the last big change.
The Internet is maturing. They don't call it
the Internet anymore. They call it cloud
computing*

Larry Ellison

Preface

Since the turn of the millennium, the IT industry has regularly been besieged by new hype. Derived from the word *hyperbole*, hype denotes a phenomenon whereby the media devotes such a high level of attention to something that it appears to be more important than it really is. One of today's most hyped terms is cloud.

What started with adaptive infrastructures and was later called grid and utility computing has now condensed to metaphoric clouds.

“Real clouds” in the sky have an interesting property: You can't see what's inside them, a sometimes-disastrous result for planes cruising at low altitude without the benefit of radar. In the case of cloud computing, the mantra is that you don't really have to know exactly what's inside a cloud as long as the price for the requested cloud service is acceptably low enough.

This may be sufficient to store your personal pictures and host a web page. But what about mission-critical applications and the sensitive data they contain? And what to do with application architectures established decades ago that simply are not “cloudable?”

SAP systems and solutions are among the most mission-critical applications within enterprises, tasked with maintaining highly sensitive data and business-critical processes. The majority of these systems are based on an SAP Basis architecture which was developed literally a century ago. Moving these systems and solutions to the cloud is not necessarily straightforward if even warranted. Even the most careful of system migrations may suffer from hiccups, obstacles, and other challenges despite the generally undisputed benefits of cloud computing.

In numerous conversations with our own SAP customers around the globe, we have learned that there is a need for a concise overview about the technologies, architectural concepts, and proven practices necessary to avoid such obstacles and challenges and successfully run SAP system landscapes atop various cloud infrastructures. This book is in response to those conversations. Our hope is SAP on the Cloud helps provide our readers with the necessary instrumentation to safely lift off and sail through the clouds, bypassing obstacles and circumventing most of these challenges on the way to quickly realizing the cloud's benefits.

Contents of This Book

This book provides an overview of the various facets of building and operating SAP applications on cloud infrastructures. It describes and discusses the latest developments, challenges, and suitable solutions, and also outlines future trends where plausible or possible.

To ensure that this book is also useful to readers who do not consider themselves to be “gurus” in this area, this book explains in detail the backgrounds of several possible cloud solutions in the context of various SAP applications and components. Examples are provided throughout this book in order to make the reader aware of essential but perhaps less-obvious points. However, keep in mind that this book concentrates exclusively on the setup and operation of the SAP infrastructure; it does not give details related to installing and customizing the SAP software itself, nor does it deal with the much more complex tasks involved in business process implementation and reengineering.

Chapter 1, *A Little History of Cloud Computing*, describes how the development of IT has culminated in the concept of cloud computing. In preparation for the topics dealt later in this book, it describes the different flavors of cloud computing and their relevance as a possible SAP platform.

Chapter 2, *From R/3 to HANA*, deals with the technical characteristics of the most commonly used SAP solutions from ECC to HANA and discusses how well they fit into the various cloud concepts described in the first chapter. This chapter gives you a good understanding of the very specific requirements of SAP systems and why not any cloud offering is a good fit for SAP.

Chapter 3, *Service Levels for SAP on Clouds*, takes you through the definition of appropriate service levels for SAP systems in cloud environments. It focuses on the prediction of the necessary resources to fulfill the SLA and how to measure and bill their actual consumption. Additional topics include service guarantees and availability as well as innovative billing tools for SAP systems.

Chapter 4, *Security Aspects for SAP Systems*, deals with one of the key topics for the decision between public and private cloud computing. The chapter provides a detailed description of the risks of cloud computing as well as hints how to harden the x86 operating systems typical for clouds.

Chapter 5, *Change and Configuration Management*, discusses the topic of lifecycle management of ever-changing business processes in cloud environments. It focuses on cloud-specific constructs such as resource pools, failure domains, scale units, health models, stateless computing, service profiles, and more, in the context of SAP.

Chapter 6, *How Public and Private Clouds Work*, assesses the technical concepts of cloud computing. Amazon AWS and Microsoft Azure are described as examples for the technologies used in public cloud; VMware vCloud and Microsoft Private Cloud as examples for software solutions used in private clouds.

Chapter 7, *From Traditional IT to Public Cloud Computing*, discusses the controversial topics of governance, control, and security of highly shared, multi-tenant computing environments. This chapter also provides an overview on a

current cloud infrastructure offering for SAP and eventually presents an outlook on new developments.

Chapter 8, *Private Cloud Infrastructures for SAP*, demonstrates how companies that prefer to retain their mission-critical SAP systems and sensitive data in-house or in their own premises can benefit from infrastructures boasting cloud attributes. This chapter introduces new developments as well, including lossless Ethernet, converged networks, and unified computing.

Chapter 9, *Stateless Computing*, describes how innovative concepts like unified computing and service profiles enable full flexibility for SAP on public and private cloud implementations and how these influence the organizational structure of SAP operations. Within the chapter containerized datacenters as well as block and pod based datacenter concepts are discussed. The chapter closes with a discussion on how green clouds can be.

Chapter 10, *Economic and Legal aspects of Cloud Computing*, explores which of the numerous promises of cloud computing may actually be realized for different organizations. This chapter indicates how business applications in the future will offer enterprises a competitive edge by enabling them to “fail fast.” In doing so, cloud-enabled organizations will benefit from their ability to pilot and change their business processes faster than their traditionally hosted counterparts.

Prerequisites

The solutions presented in this book generally refer to the latest versions of the relevant SAP products at the time of writing. While new hardware and software solutions are developed increasingly quickly, the underlying technologies and architectures change more slowly. Therefore, the cloud solutions or techniques described in this book will likely prove useful for future SAP releases. Also, many of the technical solutions and techniques presented here should be suitable for other enterprise-critical software systems, both off the shelf and custom developed.

This book has intentionally taken a neutral stance in terms of products. However, because most of the authors and contributors are employees of Cisco, Microsoft, HP, and Realtech, much of their expertise draws on the concepts and best practices developed in these companies through their partnerships with SAP and customers. For this reason, Cisco solutions are used as best practise examples of technologies that proved their worth in thousands of installations. Where the name of a specific product is mentioned, this is intended only as an example of a class of solutions and does not represent a value judgment of that product.

Acknowledgments

This book is the product of voluntary work done in our free time over many nights and weekends. We therefore dedicate this work to our wives and children, who have had to spend more time than usual without our full attention.

We would also like to thank all of our customers and colleagues who selflessly provided much help in the form of tips, contributions, reviews, and constructive criticism. Without their support, we would not have been able to write this book. In particular, we would like to call out the following people: Oliver Widhölzl from Egger Holz, Austria; Mike Bieley from Glencore International, Swiss; Nick de Groof from Maersk, Denmark; Otto Bruggeman from Intel, Deutschland, Tobias Brandl from Gopa-it; Heike Brendemuehl from Unisys; Wolfgang Neumar from Voest Alpine; Peter Klewinghaus from Amazon; Derek Kaufman retired from LS&Co; Weber Michael from Munich-Re; and Dr. Walter Dey, Peter Sladeczek, Klaus Aker, Anver Vanker, Yves Fauser, Andreas Wentland, Josephine Bruggeman and Ulrich Kleidon from Cisco.

Special thanks are also due to Robert-Andreas Riemann from Porsche, whose detailed comments influenced the content of several chapters.

The practical experience of all our advisors greatly added to the value of this book, and their support was a great source of encouragement.

A special mention, however, must also go to Christian Rauscher, our editor at Springer Heidelberg, for his involvement in the production of this book. It is due to his expert feedback that only unavoidable errors remain in this book. Mr. Rauscher has been a constant and much-welcomed partner and supporter in this regard.

*Wolken Schlösser werden von Visionären gebaut,
Träumer bewohnen sie und Psychiater kassieren die Miete¹*

¹ Castles in the clouds are build by visionaries, they give home to dreamers, but psychiatrist cash in the rental fee – German proverb.

Foreword by Nick De Groof

Today's business demands agility, availability, and faster speed of execution to meet tighter SLAs. This is provided by the office of the CIO, which has the mission to provide more capabilities, but with less human and infrastructure resources. Clearly, traditional architectures are no longer sufficient and thus new forms for deployment and management are necessary. These new Cloud architectures should not only be designed for the infrastructure but should also include whole ready-made solutions for the enterprise.

SAP solutions continue to be the most mission- and business-critical applications for an enterprise, with new SAP technologies and solutions that can integrate into an existing SAP environment, the operational and management complexity can increase dramatically. SAP on the Cloud will allow your enterprise to do more with less and effectively meet increasing business demands at a lower operational cost.

While many have just begun their adventure and are stumbling through the "mist"-eries and hype around cloud computing, the authors will guide you through the crucial initial stages and beyond in this book. As the storm rolls in, they help clear the fog and provide guidance for your enterprise to navigate through the shallow waters and underwater obstacles on your journey to running SAP on the cloud. All aspects will pass the revue, from the basics of the infrastructure requirements to host complete SAP-based solutions, to the service-level management processes and functions to best support these environments. With proper planning and navigation, the final destination of SAP on the Cloud will deliver the requirements of your enterprise, with a manageable and agile distributed architecture.

So enjoy reading and be guided. . .

Nick De Groof
SAP Technical Architect
Maersk Line IT, Copenhagen, Denmark

Foreword by Robert-Andreas Riemann

Today “the Cloud” is everywhere – analysts urge you to investigate in cloud technology and TV spots call to move all your private data to the cloud.

And the buzzwords sound great for your IT department – always enough resources on hand and a lot of money to save.

The reality may be a far cry from slogans like “Put all of our services into the cloud and you will get rid of all problems.”

As a manager in an enterprise IT you have to consider topics like Security, Governance, Validations, release management and SLA and legal issues. You also have to consider which of your IT services fit to what type of the numerous cloud flavors – if they fit at all?

Going cloud will also have an impact on the organization of your IT that breaks up established silos – organizational “kingdoms” have to be conquered to build a new federated union of collaborating teams.

This book is about SAP in the cloud. SAP solutions are among the most mission-critical applications of any company. Performance and stability of such systems often have priority over cost; nevertheless, costs are always a major issue. But to impair the business to save some money is not an option.

On the other side, the classical SAP architecture is “cloud friendly” and fits well to IaaS concepts because most SAP environments are very well standardized. However this is not true for all SAP solutions, BWA and HANA are examples of individual services that do not fit the cloud paradigm yet.

Knowing such nifty details and the technologies to overcome the obstacles offer a good chance to launch a successful SAP-on-cloud-project.

This book shows you how to move SAP into the cloud without ending up in fog.

Robert-Andreas Riemann
General Manager
IT Platformservice
Dr. Ing. H.c. F. Porsche AG

Contents

| | | |
|----------|--|----|
| 1 | A Short History of Cloud Computing | 1 |
| 1.1 | From Big Iron to Commodity | 1 |
| 1.2 | The Internet Area | 3 |
| 1.3 | Performance and Address Space | 4 |
| 1.4 | Virtualization Is Back Again | 4 |
| 1.5 | The Flavors of Cloud Computing | 6 |
| 1.5.1 | Public Cloud | 6 |
| 1.6 | Anything as a Service | 7 |
| 1.6.1 | Public Cloud Platforms for SAP | 8 |
| 1.7 | Cloud Applications | 9 |
| 1.8 | Private Clouds | 10 |
| 1.9 | Summary | 12 |
| 2 | From R/3 to HANA | 15 |
| 2.1 | SAP Business Suite | 18 |
| 2.1.1 | SAP ERP/SAP ECC | 19 |
| 2.1.2 | SAP CRM | 20 |
| 2.1.3 | SAP SCM | 20 |
| 2.1.4 | SAP SRM | 21 |
| 2.1.5 | SAP PLM | 22 |
| 2.1.6 | SAP CPM | 22 |
| 2.1.7 | SAP GRC | 23 |
| 2.1.8 | SAP Solution Manager | 23 |
| 2.2 | SAP NetWeaver | 24 |
| 2.2.1 | SAP NetWeaver BW | 24 |
| 2.2.2 | SAP NetWeaver Portal | 25 |
| 2.2.3 | SAP Knowledge Warehouse | 26 |
| 2.2.4 | SAP NetWeaver Mobile | 27 |
| 2.2.5 | SAP NetWeaver Master Data Management | 27 |
| 2.2.6 | SAP NetWeaver Process Integration | 27 |
| 2.3 | Business Objects | 28 |
| 2.4 | SAP Solutions for Small and Medium Companies | 28 |
| 2.4.1 | SAP All-in-One | 28 |

| | | |
|----------|---|-----------|
| 2.4.2 | SAP Business One | 28 |
| 2.4.3 | SAP Business ByDesign | 29 |
| 2.5 | SAP Appliances | 29 |
| 2.5.1 | Duet and Alloy | 29 |
| 2.5.2 | SAP Business Warehouse Accelerator | 30 |
| 2.5.3 | SAP High Performance Analytical Appliance | 31 |
| 2.6 | Summary | 37 |
| 3 | Service Levels for SAP on Cloud | 39 |
| 3.1 | IT Service Management Reference Model | 41 |
| 3.2 | Service Level Management | 42 |
| 3.3 | Performance Management | 43 |
| 3.3.1 | Response Time | 43 |
| 3.4 | Units of Measure for SAP Applications | 47 |
| 3.4.1 | Predicting the System Load | 48 |
| 3.4.2 | Can the Performance Be Guaranteed? | 51 |
| 3.4.3 | Measurement Based Sizing | 52 |
| 3.4.4 | SAPS-Meter | 54 |
| 3.5 | Load Profiles | 58 |
| 3.5.1 | Load Profiles of Transactional Solutions | 58 |
| 3.5.2 | Load Profiles of Analytical Systems | 60 |
| 3.5.3 | Load Profiles of Other SAP-Solutions | 60 |
| 3.6 | Availability Management | 61 |
| 3.6.1 | How to Define Availability? | 62 |
| 3.6.2 | How Many Resources Are Needed in Case of a Disaster? | 63 |
| 3.6.3 | How Much Stability Is Required? | 64 |
| 3.7 | Summary | 64 |
| 4 | Security Aspects for SAP on Cloud | 65 |
| 4.1 | The Threat Landscape | 66 |
| 4.1.1 | External Threats | 67 |
| 4.1.2 | Internal Threats | 68 |
| 4.1.3 | Technical Attacks: Viruses, Worms, Trojan Horses, etc. | 69 |
| 4.1.4 | Non-Technical Threats | 70 |
| 4.2 | Legal Aspects | 70 |
| 4.3 | Classical IT Security and the Cloud | 71 |
| 4.4 | Security on Public Clouds: Who Is Responsible? | 73 |
| 4.4.1 | Security Concept of Amazon AWS | 73 |
| 4.5 | Public Cloud Security Automation and Management | 75 |
| 4.5.1 | Hardening Red Hat Linux as Guest Operating System | 75 |
| 4.5.2 | Hardening Windows as Guest OS | 76 |
| 4.5.3 | Hardening the Hypervisors | 81 |
| 4.6 | SAP on Private Cloud: A Practical Example | 81 |
| 4.7 | Summary | 82 |

| | | |
|----------|--|-----|
| 5 | Change and Configuration Management | 83 |
| 5.1 | Introduction to Change and Configuration Management | 84 |
| 5.1.1 | Elements of the CCMS | 84 |
| 5.1.2 | Change and Configuration Data Types | 85 |
| 5.1.3 | Integrating Change and Configuration Management with SAP | 85 |
| 5.2 | Managing SAP Business Changes | 86 |
| 5.2.1 | Change Management Drives the Business and IT Lifecycle | 87 |
| 5.2.2 | IT and Business Accountability and Alignment | 87 |
| 5.3 | Managing Technology Changes | 87 |
| 5.3.1 | Understand the Configuration Management Process | 88 |
| 5.3.2 | Manage Service Templates and Profiles | 89 |
| 5.3.3 | Use a Technical Sandbox | 90 |
| 5.3.4 | Protect the Development System | 90 |
| 5.3.5 | Review the SAP Technology Stack and Tools | 91 |
| 5.3.6 | Leverage Regression Testing Tools and Capabilities | 91 |
| 5.3.7 | Maintain Technical Change and Configuration Management Rigor | 91 |
| 5.4 | Managing Organizational Change | 92 |
| 5.4.1 | Understand the Four Technology Perspectives | 94 |
| 5.4.2 | Minimize Human Involvement | 95 |
| 5.4.3 | Optimize Organizational Change Processes | 96 |
| 5.4.4 | Plan for SAP Staffing Backup Before Disaster Strikes | 96 |
| 5.4.5 | Leverage Help Desk and Operations Support Teams | 97 |
| 5.4.6 | Thoughtfully Outsource and Augment | 98 |
| 5.4.7 | Mitigate Risk by Open Exchange of Real Life Experience | 98 |
| 5.4.8 | Increase IT's Process Discipline | 99 |
| 5.5 | Summary | 100 |
| 6 | How Private and Public Clouds Work | 101 |
| 6.1 | Cloud Services Principles | 101 |
| 6.2 | Technologies for Public Clouds | 103 |
| 6.3 | Windows Azure Cloud Fabric | 103 |
| 6.3.1 | Provisioning a New Node in Azure | 105 |
| 6.3.2 | Deploying a Service into Windows Azure | 106 |
| 6.3.3 | Roles and Instances in Azure | 107 |
| 6.3.4 | Fault Domains and Upgrade Domains | 107 |
| 6.3.5 | Azure Storage | 108 |
| 6.4 | Amazon Web Services | 110 |
| 6.4.1 | Amazon EC2 Availability | 111 |
| 6.4.2 | Storage in AWS | 111 |
| 6.5 | Technologies for Private Clouds | 113 |
| 6.6 | Microsoft Private Cloud | 114 |

| | | |
|----------|---|------------|
| 6.7 | VMware vCloud | 115 |
| 6.8 | Summary | 116 |
| 7 | SAP Solutions on Public Clouds | 117 |
| 7.1 | Public Clouds: A Short Overview | 118 |
| 7.1.1 | Cloud Standards | 119 |
| 7.1.2 | Cloud APIs | 121 |
| 7.2 | Can Public Clouds Meet SAP Application Requirements? | 122 |
| 7.3 | Amazon Web Service for SAP | 125 |
| 7.3.1 | Instance Types for SAP (Server Building Blocks) | 126 |
| 7.3.2 | AWS Storage for SAP | 127 |
| 7.3.3 | Network: Amazon Virtual Private Cloud | 128 |
| 7.3.4 | Backup/Restore of SAP Applications on EC2 Instances . . | 129 |
| 7.3.5 | SAP High-Availability in AWS | 130 |
| 7.3.6 | Monitoring with Amazon CloudWatch | 131 |
| 7.3.7 | Other Aspects of SAP on AWS | 131 |
| 7.3.8 | AWS Service Levels | 132 |
| 7.4 | Outlook: Public Clouds and SAP | 132 |
| 7.4.1 | Beyond the Physical Boundaries | 133 |
| 7.4.2 | SAP NetWeaver Cloud | 134 |
| 7.4.3 | Project Titanium | 135 |
| 7.5 | Summary | 136 |
| 8 | Private Cloud Infrastructures for SAP | 137 |
| 8.1 | SAP Landscapes | 138 |
| 8.1.1 | SAP System Architecture | 139 |
| 8.1.2 | 2-tier versus 3-tier | 140 |
| 8.2 | Server Architectures: Nifty Details? | 141 |
| 8.2.1 | Multi-core and Multi-thread | 142 |
| 8.2.2 | Inter Core Communication and Access to Main Memory | 144 |
| 8.2.3 | Scale-up Versus Scale-out | 146 |
| 8.2.4 | Rack Mount Versus Blade | 146 |
| 8.2.5 | Memory: Fast but Volatile | 148 |
| 8.3 | Storage: Hard and Other Disks | 149 |
| 8.3.1 | Sizing for Throughput | 149 |
| 8.3.2 | The Disk Is Dead: But Is SSD Already King? | 152 |
| 8.4 | Network | 153 |
| 8.4.1 | User Network | 153 |
| 8.4.2 | Server Network | 156 |
| 8.4.3 | Storage Network | 156 |
| 8.4.4 | Fibre Channel over Ethernet (FCoE) | 157 |
| 8.4.5 | iSCSI | 159 |

| | | |
|-----------|--|------------|
| 8.5 | Unified Computing | 160 |
| 8.5.1 | Converged Network Adapters | 161 |
| 8.5.2 | Port Extenders | 162 |
| 8.5.3 | Fabric Extender | 162 |
| 8.5.4 | Fabric Interconnects | 163 |
| 8.5.5 | Unification and Virtualization | 163 |
| 8.5.6 | Software Based Fabric Extender | 164 |
| 8.5.7 | Hardware Based Fabric Extender | 165 |
| 8.6 | Summary | 165 |
| 9 | Stateless Computing | 167 |
| 9.1 | Service Profile Definition | 169 |
| 9.1.1 | Unified Computing and VMware’s vCenter | 171 |
| 9.2 | Cloud Operation with Stateless Computing | 173 |
| 9.2.1 | IDPools | 173 |
| 9.2.2 | Server Pools | 175 |
| 9.2.3 | Administrative Organization for SAP on Cloud | 176 |
| 9.3 | Cloud Data Center Facilities | 177 |
| 9.3.1 | How Green Clouds Can Be? | 178 |
| 9.4 | Summary | 180 |
| 10 | Economic and Legal Aspects of Cloud Computing | 181 |
| 10.1 | Trial and Error-Fast and Cheap | 182 |
| 10.1.1 | Economic Risks and Other Considerations | 182 |
| 10.1.2 | Legal Implications | 183 |
| 10.2 | Economic Myths, Realities, and Other Observations | 183 |
| 10.2.1 | Innovative Cloud Platforms Do Not Necessarily Cost Less | 184 |
| 10.2.2 | Volume Discounts Rarely Drive Economies of Scale | 184 |
| 10.2.3 | The Cloud May Not Yield Greener IT for Some Time | 185 |
| 10.2.4 | Cloud Software Licensing Models Remain Unchanged | 185 |
| 10.2.5 | CapEx Versus OpEx May Myths | 186 |
| 10.3 | Business Economics of the Cloud for SAP | 186 |
| 10.3.1 | Macroeconomics and Other Market Drivers | 187 |
| 10.3.2 | Business Risks, Functionality, Data Sensitivity, and Role | 188 |
| 10.3.3 | Developing Cloud Business Cases for SAP | 189 |
| 10.4 | Technology Economics and Considerations | 190 |
| 10.4.1 | Demand, Supply, and the Buying Hierarchy | 190 |
| 10.4.2 | Technology Attributes and Challenges | 191 |
| 10.4.3 | Public Cloud Opportunities and Challenges | 191 |

| | | |
|--------|---|------------|
| 10.4.4 | Private Cloud Opportunities and Challenges | 192 |
| 10.4.5 | Hybrid Cloud Opportunities and Challenges | 192 |
| 10.5 | Organizational Economics and Considerations | 193 |
| 10.5.1 | The Business End-User Community | 193 |
| 10.5.2 | Reinventing the Internal SAP IT Organization | 194 |
| 10.5.3 | Organizational Process Discipline or Hardening | 194 |
| 10.5.4 | Cloud Service Providers and Hosters | 195 |
| 10.5.5 | Evaluating Organizational Readiness for Change | 195 |
| 10.5.6 | An Effective Model for SAP IT Organizational Change | 196 |
| 10.5.7 | Organizational Skills and Staffing | 197 |
| 10.6 | The Legal Landscape for SAP Cloud Computing | 198 |
| 10.6.1 | Governance, Risk, Compliance, and Geographic Constraints | 198 |
| 10.6.2 | Internal GRC Considerations | 199 |
| 10.6.3 | Data and Security Considerations | 199 |
| 10.6.4 | People Considerations | 200 |
| 10.6.5 | Developing a Legally-Informed Cloud Economics Plan | 201 |
| 10.7 | Summary | 201 |
| | About the Authors | 203 |
| | Index | 207 |

Cloud Computing is the latest buzzword in the IT. This chapter helps to understand why Clouds have become so prominent in the IT world, what benefits are expected to be achieved by cloud computing and in which flavors computing clouds are available.

Hardly any other word in IT in recent years has been used as frequently as Cloud Computing. The difficulty here is that the term Cloud Computing does not refer to an individual and isolated subject, but rather that it is an umbrella term for a variety of services and solutions.

► **A clear view into the cloud**

In order to provide a sound basis for considering the form in which Cloud Computing can be used for SAP applications, we will first deal with the question of how Cloud Computing has developed in detail and from what components it is composed.

1.1 From Big Iron to Commodity

Let us first go back about 20 years in IT history. Around 1990, major changes occurred in the IT landscape of many companies. While companies were committed for decades to mainframes as a platform for business applications like SAP R/2, a small revolution became apparent: the client/server technology enabled by the UNIX operating system and SAP R/3 as a complete business solution. As in real life, IT revolutions never happen without reason.

► ***From dinosaur into the stone age***

Mainframes were quite powerful, but expensive machines. Because memory was extremely limited, their processors had been optimized over decades to perform complex tasks with as little machine code as possible. Due to their complex commands, they were called Complex Instruction Set Computers (CISC).

In contrast, the then newly developed processors utilized in UNIX systems had relatively few simple commands that could be processed very quickly. More complex tasks were modeled in the compiler as a series of simple commands. With the Reduced Instruction Set Computer (RISC), UNIX systems outperformed the CISC-based mainframes by far at much lower costs.

Under these conditions the competition between mainframes and RISC systems resembles soon as the race between the tortoise and the hare. The evolution took its course and many businesses decided in favor of the combination of UNIX systems and SAP applications.

In the following years, the RISC systems became larger and boasted a steady increase in processing power. This development was initially triggered by the Symmetric Multi-Processor (SMP) architecture which supported typically up to eight processors running in parallel in a server to run in.

A few years later the Non Uniform Memory Access (NUMA) enabled servers with up to 128 processors and 64-bit architecture provided the necessary large memory configurations. Such servers that have been referred to as scale-up solutions.

By the use of partitioning they could in turn be divided into smaller logical units. This enables mainframe-like consolidation, the pooling of as many applications as possible. The UNIX servers however have become also quite expensive this way. Thus a new form of mainframe was resurrected at the end of the '90s.

A relatively unspectacular development occurred about 1993; the support of servers based on processors from Intel and AMD for SAP applications with Windows and later Linux as operating systems. Although these systems were not comparable with the scalability of the big UNIX systems, they established an entry level segment for SAP systems.

► ***Early settlements and agriculture***

The first published benchmark of an SAP system on Windows reached about 100 SD users with 4 CPUs of the Pentium-Pro family, a value which was then exceeded by even small UNIX servers easily.

The biggest advantage of these servers was their low cost, which enabled SAP to win a large number of medium-sized companies for their applications on the "Wintel" platform. Because of their low costs, plenty of these servers are being used in data centers – resulting in the so-called "server sprawl".

New and interesting developments such as High-Performance Compute Cluster (HPCC) used such low cost computers in large quantities in parallel. Because of the more distributed character of their usage, the term Scale-Out computing soon established itself for this class of computers.

1.2 The Internet Area

Around the year 1995 there was a very different revolution: the Internet became commercially viable. According to an estimate, the usage of the Internet for global data exchange in 1993 was only about 1 %. However, by 2000 the Internet was already the main telecommunications network with 51 % of the worldwide traffic. By 2007, the utilization of the Internet for all data transfers was at 97 % and since then has approached the 100 % mark.

► *Coal and iron establish industrialization*

The Internet was one of the most important technical developments at the end of last century and in the end dominated all areas of communication.

Hand in hand with the ever-increasing acceptance and the range of available content, telecommunications companies made huge investments in network expansion and bandwidth as they realized that the Internet promised to be the largest gold mine since the invention of the microprocessor.

In spite of the huge investment, the price of internet services dropped dramatically driven by the worldwide competition in the telecom market. Data transfer with superior performance at a practically negligible price became a matter of fact.

One of the biggest challenges to companies wanting to use this publicly accessible medium for their sensitive data was the aspect of security. This consisted of the potential for data theft, spying and the manipulation of the data.

With new technologies such as encryption and Virtual Private Networks (VPN) communication over internet became secure enough for business systems. IT infrastructures were operated with firewalls and gateway servers located in so-called De-Militarized Zones (DMZ) in order to isolate the crucial server environments from the public Internet. An entire industry and new IT architectures was developed around the issue of security to become the essential foundation for the commercial use of the Internet today.

The result of extremely high bandwidth at a reasonable cost and security level was the foundation for new business models for IT operations on the Internet. Hosting providers and outsourcers adopted this business model and delivered IT operations as a “commodity” at lower cost than would have been possible with traditional IT operations. The foundation of this business model is maximum automation and standardization in the data centers of the hosting providers.

The principle of economies of scale benefited the big players and led to the fact that a few large companies such as EDS (later acquired by HP), IBM and T-Systems dominate the market.

The worldwide availability of affordable network connectivity through the Internet was the most important enabling technology for cloud computing.