TRANSFORMING I.T. TO A SERVICE PROVIDER

SUMMARY

In order to stay relevant, IT has to transform itself from a traditional keeper of infrastructure, to a provider of software services, at a price point that is not dissimilar to SaaS.

Neuralytix believes the solutions such as Gridstore's "Cloud-in-a-Box" to be a prime example of what can be achieved, and what enterprises should look at for the future.

Research Note

ANALYSIS

For nearly a decade, the promise of utility computing has been the lure of the IT department. As Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) gained prominence and acceptance in the enterprise, this has resulted in enterprises questioning the role of IT.

In order to stay relevant, IT has to transform itself from a traditional keeper of infrastructure, to a provider of software services, at a price point that is not dissimilar to SaaS.

However, building out an enterprise level service provider infrastructure has required massive capital investment. Additionally, IT had to cobble together the various components of the infrastructure from disparate vendors with the hope that the performance, compatibility, and scalability all conform to the needs of the enterprise. In essence, the enterprise is repeating what the Web 2.0 service provider has already built.

The difference between the Web 2.0 service provider and modern enterprise, is that they were prepared to push the limits of technology, and service and maintain its own infrastructure. That is not really an option for the enterprise.

Instead, what the modern enterprise needs is a pre-integrated infrastructure solution that encompasses: compute, networking, storage, hypervisor, operating system(s) and management. The management component has to be able to provision, orchestrate, automate, instrument and provide self-healing capabilities.

In essence, what the modern enterprise is looking for is a "cloud-in-a-box" solution.

CLOUD-IN-A-BOX

Apart from the infrastructure components listed above, the "cloud-in-a-box" must also provide multi-tenancy, the ability to deliver Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS) and Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS), while offering self-service capabilities for the applications that it provides.

Deployment and scalability of such a solution needs to be completely integrated and minimal administration and management intervention will assure success.

An example of such a solution would be Gridstore's "Cloud-in-a-Box" solution. It combines all the necessary infrastructure components listed above.

Gridstore "Cloud-in-a-Box"

Apart from integrating all the components into a small form factor, through the intelligent use of flash storage, Gridstore is able to dramatically reduce the footprint of its solution. The significance of this is that not only is the solution able to leverage common-off-the-shelf (COTS) components to reduce cost, the massively reduced overall footprint will also significantly reduce power and cooling cost.

By leveraging Microsoft's Windows Azure Pack, Gridstore provides a high degree of compatibility and integration, with consistent service delivery.

Augmented to these features is the single pane of glass management console that simplifies management – from provisioning virtual storage pools, to standing up a new virtual machine.

Neuralytix has reviewed the specifications submitted in a "head-to-head" comparison of components, and verifies that based on the number of nodes, cores, RAM and network bandwidth that the Gridstore "Cloud-in-a-Box" is able to reduce the cost of a typical virtual machine (VM) by a factor of almost 64% per VM.

Our assessment also shows a reduction in rack usage by over 75%, essentially reducing power and cooling costs by over two-thirds.

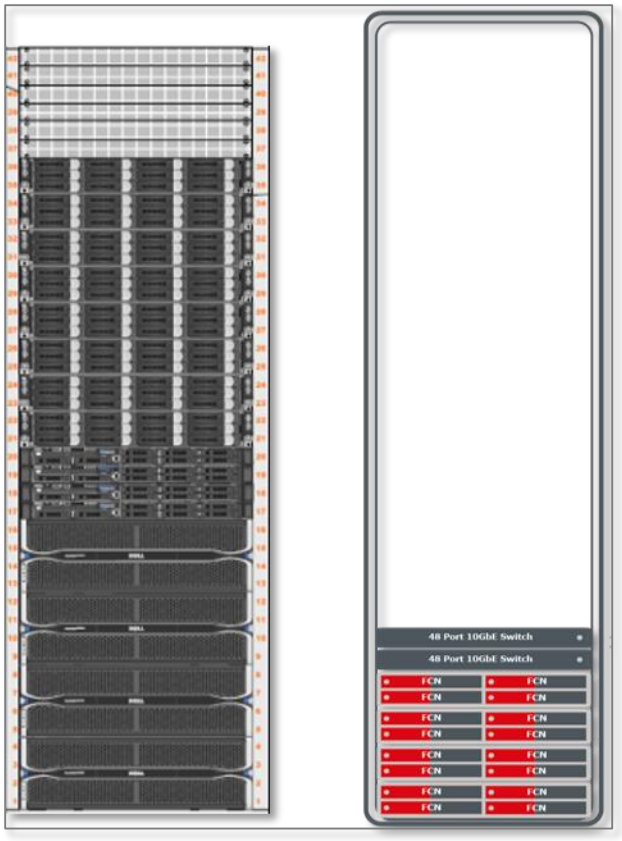

Figure 1: Comparison of Microsoft Cloud Platform System Powered by Dell and Gridstore "Cloud-in-a-Box"

Since the Gridstore “Cloud-in-a-Box” is delivered in a hyperconverged infrastructure (HCI) form-factor, there is no need for specialized administrators to manage the solution.

CONCLUSION

Cloud is not a difficult idea. The benefits are well documented. However, *building* a cloud environment requires the integration of many components – including hardware, software and services. With the cost of maintaining IT infrastructure reaching almost 80% of the total cost of ownership, simplifying complex technologies is paramount.

Additionally, with the focus shifting from infrastructure to insights from information, the demand to have a scalable, flexible, predictable infrastructure is at its peak.

In order to stay relevant, IT *must* begin to transform itself from a provider of infrastructure to a provider of application services.

Neuralytix believes the solutions such as Gridstore's "Cloud-in-a-Box" to be a prime example of what can be achieved, and what enterprises should look at for the future.

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