

Converged infrastructure and services key to agile IT provisioning

 By [AJ Hartenberg](#)

22 Jul 2015

In today's world, connectivity and connectedness are essential. Customers are no longer satisfied with silos of information and disparate systems that cannot interact with each other. The real value of technology can only be realised if solutions are fully integrated, from the infrastructure layer right through to applications and services.

Traditionally, this integration has been one of the biggest cost centres for IT, creating additional layers of complexity and often only limited integration functionality. The convergence of networks, infrastructure, platforms, applications and services, enabled by the cloud and software-defined solutions, has changed this model for good. Dynamic infrastructure as a service solution empower organisations to leverage converged technologies to support mobility, enable BYOD and, ultimately, take advantage of fully flexible, automated and agile IT provisioning, essential for competitiveness in a changing business world.



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Enabling factor for fully converged technology and infrastructure solutions

Limited integration has been an ongoing challenge in the IT space, as in the past OEMs and vendors have operated in isolation, focussing on their own technology stacks without a thought to how they might work together to enhance operations. The cost of integrating different solutions has always been high as a result, and many solutions ended up simply being workarounds that added complexity while only delivering limited functionality. If technology solutions do not work in harmony with others, organisations not only lose their ability to be agile but are also unable to leverage the full potential value of their technology.

With the advent of the OpenStack community as well as initiatives such as the Open Datacentre Alliance, this mindset began to change, ensuring open standards across different vendor technologies. Integration has been further driven by the cloud, and convergence at the software layer provided the final enabling factor for fully converged technology and infrastructure solutions.

Commodity items

With software-defined solutions providing the necessary integration layer that enables convergence, infrastructure, networks and even data centres have become commodity items. All of these previous cost centres can now be offered as a service, for a fixed monthly fee, which helps organisations to reduce IT complexity and capital outlay while simplifying and expediting technology and process adoption. This enables organisations to benefit from full automation in terms of integration and provides the basis for dynamic services and solutions to be delivered.

The convergence of applications and services on top of an integrated, dynamic IT infrastructure enables organisations to deliver a single, virtualised front-end to their employees. The concept of 'zero desktop' is made a reality, as employees are no longer tied to a specific desk or even a specific computer. A consistent user experience can be delivered to all employees, regardless of the device they use or even their location. This empowers true Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) ability, allowing staff to access internal applications from anywhere in the world using virtualised services and a web browser.

In addition to facilitating mobility, the dynamic workplace also ensures security. All data resides on centralised servers and not on the device, so there is no risk of data leakage should the device be lost or stolen. Patches and security upgrades are

centrally controlled, removing the potential for vulnerabilities resulting from out of date software. This empowers employees to work from anywhere, on any device, without compromising stringent corporate security protocols.

The evolution of convergence

The IT environment of the past was all about building the physical bits and pieces necessary to deliver technology services. Thanks to the evolution of convergence, system integrators have now taken over this role, dramatically simplifying the technology procurement process for businesses. Organisations are now looking at virtualised, converged data centres, which deliver fully automated provisioning dynamically, as capacity is required. By scaling up and down dynamically based on requirements, organisations can leverage the increased agility they need to drive innovation.

As convergence continues to evolve, we can expect to see even more solutions offering advantages for organisations, from data and mobility as a service to hospital systems, retail point of sale, databases, big data, mobile device management and even WAN optimisation as a service. These solutions are all driven by and enabled by converged, dynamic services infrastructure, empowering the business of the future to leverage agile technology to full advantage.

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