Africa is embracing cloud services at a rapid rate

The past few years have seen cloud computing gaining momentum in the corporate and consumer markets. People are embracing cloud services at a rapid rate as fixed and mobile broadband adoption start to become virtually ubiquitous.

This trend is extending to Africa with the arrival of several undersea cables bringing with them an abundance of bandwidth that are seeing many countries on the continent moving away from traditional servers to a mobile environment.

"Traffic to the cloud, incorporating voice, video, and data services will increase exponentially in the coming years. In fact, Africa is expected to have the highest compound annual growth rate in the world when it comes to cloud traffic growth as more companies are adopting cloud-based solutions. This will lead to a rise in cloud workloads on the continent for the foreseeable future," says Thierry Boulanger, director of IT Solutions and B2B at Samsung Africa.

Africa in a fortunate position

Africa has been in the fortunate position that it can monitor the technology trends in the rest of the world and adapt them to suit the unique conditions and requirements of companies and consumers here. In certain respects, Africa is well-known for being able to leapfrog the legacy phases of technology adoption and harness the power of new technologies and next-generation networks.

What's more with mobile penetration on the continent being one of the highest in the world, countries do not have to go through extensive fixed-line infrastructure development. Some are able to boast mobile penetration rates that exceed the population as people use multiple devices and SIM cards from several operators to benefit from network-specific pricing and other special offers.

"On the one hand, cloud services are changing the way people engage with technology, access information, and share content with one another. On the other, mobile devices are evolving to be better able to provide users with the flexibility required to do this. Manufacturers that are able to meet these changing requirements from their devices will best be positioned to provide users with the tools they need to live a digital and cloud-based lifestyle. Notebooks, tablets, printers, smartphones, and even traditional consumer appliances like refrigerators and air-conditioners have become the portals to the cloud," continues Boulanger.

Providing access devices

It is on this basis that Samsung have built their cloud strategy - focusing not on the data centres and the foundational infrastructure, but rather on providing access devices - devices that enable customers to use cloud services anytime anywhere. Adds Boulanger: "Samsung offers a range of products that includes smartphones, tablets, PCs and thin

terminals based on different hardware and OSes. There is a growing interest in Android, Windows 8 and Windows Mobile, and enterprises will ultimately need to deploy cloud services - either from Samsung or third parties - so data can be easily shared between devices. Currently our vision is to dominate the 'access product' space and our diverse and dynamic product portfolio is designed with in mind."

These products and devices need to be designed in such a way that operators across Africa will be able to benefit from people interfacing with them. Manufacturers do not have the luxury of designing products that only work with certain operators or restrict users from accessing certain services. People on the continent demand flexibility, customisability, and user-friendliness at a price that is cost-effective for Third World countries with First World aspirations.

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