2011: THE CLOUD FROM HYPE TO DEPLOYMENT....

The year 2010 saw the Cloud get stage spotlight. We take a closer look at the silver lining.

The year 2010 saw the Cloud get stage spotlight, with Cloud computing success stories like those of Twitter, Facebook, Google Apps and Salesforce.com become common place among the large enterprise. Legacy data centers will continue to fade away and receive a facelift as virtualization and consolidation strategies evolve into Cloud computing strategies.

Tight IT budgets, increased consumer service expectations and cut-throat competition continue to put pressure on both private sector and government agencies - the next generation consumer is here. They’re socially networked and demanding more from the organizations they do business with. They have more outlets for voicing opinions about their experiences than ever before. Engaging in proactive conversations with these consumers to manage and deliver on their expectations continues to become a critical factor to every company’s success story.

In 2011, Cloud Computing offerings will continue to dominate and transform traditional computing models. One such offering is the Cloud ECM.

Enterprise Content Management (ECM) is a means by which an organization manages and organizes its information to increase productivity and enable better decision making. This information may exist in many digital forms: text documents, engineering drawings, XML, still images, audio and various other file types and formats.

ECM controls the publishing of content through multiple channels. For instance, a single piece of content may be published simultaneously to a website, broadcast as a fax, printed as a text document or sent to handheld mobile devices.

ECM is generally considered to be an amalgamation of a number of distinct but interrelated applications - Enterprise Document Management (EDM), Web Content Management (WCM), Digital Asset Management (DAM), Enterprise Records Management (ERM), Business Process Management (BPM), Enterprise Content Integration (ECI) and Collaborative Content Management (CCM).

CLOUD AND THE ENTERPRISE CONTENT MANAGEMENT (ECM) STRATEGY.

BPM goes beyond workflow and lifecycle management to define, model, and manage all kinds of business processes consistently and reliably across multiple organizations, systems and applications. ECI technology, a subset of ECM, enables the integration of all content sources inside and outside the enterprise, regardless of content location or how content is accessed.

Collaboration technology, another subset of ECM, is becoming increasingly important in organizations. Working in harmony with BPM, this collaboration allows the participants in a business process to come together to optimize the process for mutual benefit. This brings partners, suppliers, customers, and agencies together in a controlled way and manages and leverages collaborative content such as discussion threads, voting results, and documents.

All of this functionality has one purpose - to leverage enterprise knowledge assets. How effectively organizations deal with mission-critical information and expose it as usable content to support employees, partners and consumers is becoming a recognized differentiator.

Cloud computing is a better way to run your business.

An Enterprise Content Management Strategy or (ECM Strategy) simply means reviewing not only the technology aspects of an organization but the information governance, people and processes so that associated capabilities relate back to the strategy, ensuring that ECM solutions are more effective. Rapidly changing market conditions require organizations to quickly innovate, optimize their business and lower costs. The need for speed and precision increases daily.

An ECM platform integrated with Business Process Management (BPM) delivers the flexibility required to increase business agility and effectiveness, delivering critical decisions at the moment it matters most. Today’s ECM strategies implemented on the cloud, commonly referenced to as infrastructure as a service (IaaS), set to help organizations gain a competitive cutting edge.

Cloud and the ECM strategy

Traditional Enterprise Content Management (ECM) software has always been complicated, slow and too expensive and therefore harder get to real business value. It involves a complicated software stack and a team of experts to install, configure, and run them. They need production, development, testing, and staging failover environments.

Cloud computing is a better way to run your business. Instead of developing, maintaining and running your content management applications yourself, you access everything you need through the web. You just log in, customise it, and start using it. That’s the power of cloud computing.

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Successful companies manage and deliver content for excellent customer service, mapping maximum workforce efficiency and double-digit return on investment. State and local government, financial services, healthcare and the energy sectors focus has to remain customer-centric if they are to remain competitive and profitable.

Organizations are constantly looking for ways to cut costs, but don’t realize that these cost cutting measures may also have positive environmental effects that can increase goodwill and shareholder value. Your organization can effect environmental change by moving printed information online.

How much money can your business save by reducing its reliance on paper? If an enterprise with staff of 10,000 sends and receives an average of two pages per day, they can save $670,000 or more every year, digitizing documents reduces the need for paper. The more you digitize your paper and keep it online or in the control of your computer systems; the more money you save, the more secure your information is through controlled access.

Leading industry analysts believe that 80 percent of business activities are supported by unstructured content. Yet bringing content management to an enterprise level can be challenging so by not taking a strategic approach, your organization may lack:

• Best practice use - Creating Value from Content.
• Enterprise information sharing.
• Project leadership.
• Streamlined decision cycle through collaborative decision management which enables decision making to the front line through “empowered” knowledge workers as opposed to top level decision makers only.
• Competitive Advantage: The level playing field is, in fact, not level at all. There is actually a steep slope. How well a company manages its content and its processes online, dictates where they are on the slope - rising to the top or sliding to the bottom.

For any organization, information management is a major challenge. But it’s also fundamental to achieving success, both now and in the future. Taking advantage of Cloud Computing offerings will drive and take your organization to new profitability levels and win the confidence of your stake holders, notwithstanding the most important person in our business - the customer.
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*By Joseph Hibagoh
Software engineer, Business Applications
jhibagoh@sevenseastech.com

Cloud computing is a better way to run your business*
IP-TV convergence/integrated services

Interactivity:

Interactivity allows the TV viewing experience to be more interactive and personalized. For example, an interactive program guide that allows viewers to search for content by title or actor’s name, or a picture-in-picture functionality that allows them to “channel surf” without leaving the program they’re watching. Viewers may be able to look up a player’s stats while watching a sports game, or control the camera angle. They also may be able to access photos or music from their PC or their television, use a wireless phone to schedule a recording of their favorite show, or even adjust parental controls so their child can watch a documentary for a school report, while they’re away from home.

Video-on-demand

IPTV technology permits someone to browse an online program or film catalog, to watch trailers and to then select a selected recording. The play-out of the selected item starts nearly immediately and will bring internet to your TV. IP Protocol has improved your home communication and the TV experience tremendously.

Traditionally, TVs receive channels over the air; the channel information is transmitted from the broadcaster as analogue signals and carries no more information. For you to receive the signal you normally mount antennae on top of your house and tune the TV. Some technological advancement that has really changed our homes is the discovery of the internet protocol commonly referred to as IP. Internet protocol is the method by which devices exchange data with each other, for instance your laptop uses this protocol to download emails from a centralized storage so that you can view them. There were other protocols that were used before IP but did not receive the same level of acceptance that IP had. This has seen almost any device that communicates with another device being designed around the protocol. 

IPTV enables the transmission of "rich" TV channels in the same medium as internet and movies. This means that you get only one connection from one service provider and you will be able to access internet from any PC or laptop in the house, use phone services and also enjoy a rich TV experience. The connection to the service provider can either be wired or wireless; satellite, WiMax wireless technology, Wi-Fi, Fibre or pre-existing cable infrastructure and other technologies currently being developed. Have a look at the following diagram depicting typical IPTV connection in your home.

Why IPTV in my house?

Interactivity:

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Let’s travel back in time and picture how our homes used to look like more than ten years ago. I am sure the first thing that comes to your mind is your seating room entertainment devices or your kitchen electronics depending on where you spend your time more. Most seating rooms or lounges used to have a manchome or black and white television set (yes, I bet Father Christmas was known to be a black and white guy), a radio set receiving amplitude modulated (AM) stations and always had a cassette slot, a fixed wired phone on the table and of course a video cassette recorder (VCR).

These devices have always served as forms of entertainment, sources of information and communication channels. While these gadgets used to serve us faithfully, they had various limitations. The TV didn’t project life in its full colour, the technology didn’t allow for many clear channels and the worst feature was the curved screen that made it difficult to watch news if seated at a corner. The radio was good but also lacked clear channels due to interferences, selecting a certain track from the cassette player were hard and tedious. The phone refused to be mobile at all and limited you to calling during office hours or else calling your few friends who were blessed to have one at home.

I know I have not mentioned much about the kitchen but we all know you had to be more creative since there were no microwaves to warm the food fast, blender for instant fresh juice, toaster or sandwich maker for sizzling hot breakfasts. I almost forgot to tell the bachelors that there were no washing machines!

In the recent past technology has evolved to change the way we do things at home, communicate with the outside world and even entertainment at home. We have to enjoy surround entertainment systems in our homes, watch digital satellite TV with global channels, watch live events, download and watch movies from the internet in the comfort of our houses, experience live streaming of music, experience graphics in games like we have never seen before.

The biggest technological advancement that has really changed our homes is the discovery of the internet protocol commonly referred to as IP. Internet protocol is the method by which devices exchange data with each other, for instance your laptop uses this protocol to access photos or music from their PC or their television, use a wireless phone to schedule a recording of their favorite show, or even adjust parental controls so their child can watch a documentary for a school report, while they’re away from home.

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IPTV was first experienced in 1999 in Canada, other developed and developing countries have followed suit. It’s now time for Kenya to have the great experience.
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The biggest technological advancement that has really changed our homes is the discovery of the internet protocol commonly referred to as IP. Internet protocol is the method by which devices exchange data with each other, for instance your laptop uses this protocol to download emails from a centralized storage so that you can view them. There were other protocols that were used before IP but did not receive the same recognition that IP had. This has seen almost any device that communicates with another device being designed around the protocol. One of the great ways that IP has changed the way you do things at home is through the television system.

Traditionally, TVs receive channels over the air, the channel information is transmitted from the broadcaster as analogue signals and carries no more information. For you to receive the signal you normally mount antennae on top of your house and tune the TV. This was the way TV channels were transmitted. The biggest technological advancement has been the digital transmission of TV via satellite or over terrestrial transmission. Digital transmission enables more channels to be transmitted over the shared medium (Air) and also allows for interactive TV.

The best example for digital TV in Kenya currently is DSTV and also some other local stations as government moves to phase out analogue transmission.

Television can now be transmitted using the IP protocol to form what has come to be labeled as IPTV. IPTV is currently being rolled out in Kenya by some telecommunication companies and we should expect to experience it in the next couple of months.

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