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HOW THE EUC REALM IS EMBRACING CLOUD

Abstract

With the cloud revolution in full swing, we are witnessing a proliferation of resounding success stories around cloud implementation. Large scale business applications are evolving and embracing cloud like never. Enterprise application vendors have been announcing S-a-a-S versions of their applications in abundance. The market is no longer pondering upon the "why" question, but it is more curious about "how" to adopt the cloud wave.

Over the past few years in the End User Computing (EUC) realm, where the end-user is the center of all attention, the evolution in the user maturity has been conspicuous. Today, they use multiple devices, demand the user data to be ubiquitous, want to be extremely collaborative and social across all digital platforms, possess a higher sense of data security, and require the latest updates on their devices. However, the work environment scene continues to be on premise and local to the end user: an input device, a processor and an output device.

In that case, the question arises, where do the opportunities to embrace cloud in the EUC realm exist?

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The initial ring of cloud adoption in this realm started with the adoption of cloud versions of popular productivity applications (viz. Exchange Online, Gmail, Office 365, Adobe DC etc.). Today, the licensing and configuration of these applications are being done using vendor-provided portals where subscriptions are managed. This model has already established identity federation between enterprises and cloud vendors, thereby, paving the way for bringing in more products and areas under the cloud umbrella.

Recent advancements in technology, coupled with market demands and adoption trends will be the primary reasons why the areas of **software management, virtual desktops and end user data** have the potential to take the next leap into cloud. The areas of **collaboration and end user analytics** are in vogue and are predicted to gain ground based on the value that the technology is going to create in the years to come.

In the following section, we will talk about how the cloud adoption in each of these areas is taking shape.

Subscriptions

Management Software

Virtual Desktops & Apps

End User Data

End User Analytics

Collaboration

Corporate office
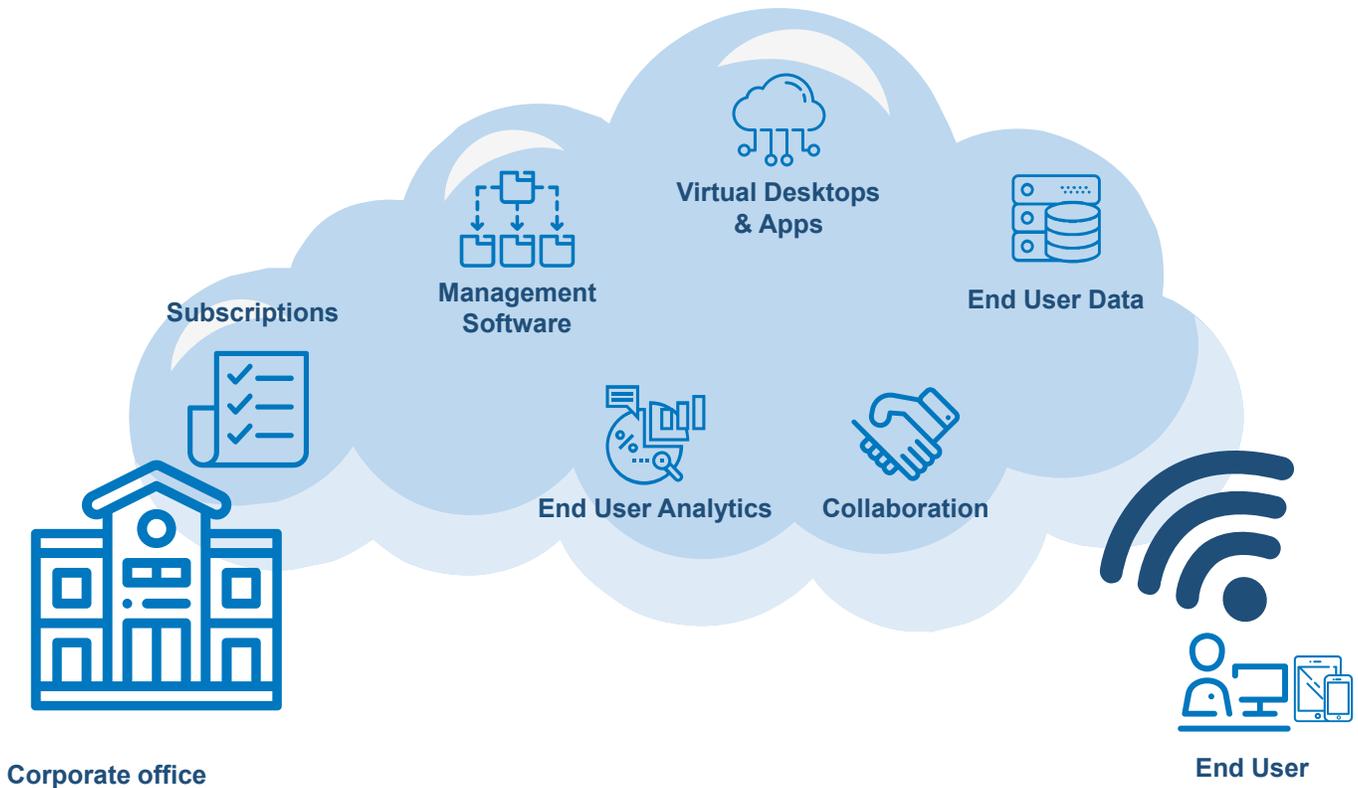
End User

Client Management

Version releases of operating systems & applications are predicted to happen more frequently than ever, because of end users' growing needs for device form factors, trailblazing features and never ending security threats. The latest versions of software management products are unfolding features which will allow for co-managing various device form factors using a single window, which of course, is delivered from the cloud.

Cloud vendors, equipment manufacturers and enterprise administrators are coming together to identify a middle ground so that the end user gets the software and operating system upgrades at any point of time and from anywhere.

The enterprise application store, already a reality in many modern enterprises, is now being visualized as a uniform interface that can deliver compatible applications across platforms from cloud by the modern end user.

From an administrator perspective, various products are coming together to give a single management plane from cloud that can upgrade OS, patches and corporate policies. This can potentially reduce operational overhead and bring uniformity among people, process and technology.

Virtual Desktops & Apps

The obvious challenge that was posed by a traditional VDI setup was hefty infrastructure costs and time-to-market. To overcome this, we enlisted the help of numerous vendors who were offering a pay-as-you-go VDI/Virtual App service on Cloud.

Next-generation cloud VDI products are being developed by incorporating native integration features for cloud-based platforms such as ServiceNow, which will give the power of self service to the end users while enabling administrators to automatically manage SLAs.

The latest releases of Windows Desktop operating system has a feature to allow multiple sessions, similar to the very famous session host server feature. This is expected to put a check to the application compatibility issues, which was a major area of concern in legacy setups.

Application layering is not a new concept but with the power of cloud, new possibilities of dealing with data and application dependencies are being explored.

End user data

Disaster recovery has been cited as one of the primary reasons for the migration of end user data to cloud.

The recent developments in end user data storage products are predominantly covering areas like synchronization, availability and security. Synchronization and availability addresses how fast the data can be made available if the end user accesses the data from a completely new device or if the existing device is lost or stolen. Data encryption addresses data security scenarios not only at rest, but also while on the move.

Some of the products in the market are capable of expediting data availability as quickly as mapping a drive, while giving equal importance to data security.

Collaboration

In a traditional setup, audio and video conferencing used to be the "must have" expectation from a collaboration solution. With the entry of millennials into the workforce, the expectations from a collaboration tool in corporate world soared up. To meet these expectations, next generation collaboration tools are bringing in the power of bots, social networking, content management & sharing along with audio and video conferencing capabilities.

While the enterprises want their work force to take the social networking tide, they are also very keen on enforcing policies, observing discussions & trends and conducting meaningful analysis of the emotional behavior of the workforce. This has opened doors for a lot of innovative products in this area.

End User Analytics

Analyzing the end user footprints in the IT landscape is now a trending and impactful area of the EUC realm. Especially with the power of cloud computing and the quantum of data that can be generated from the latest applications, the opportunity to arrive at meaningful insights around the workforce behavior is very promising. So far, application and device metering, crash data, hours of activity parameters were collected from the EUC devices and insights on the productivity of the workforce were drawn. Latest workplace analytics tools, coupled with the power of cloud are committing to touch the emotional wellbeing trends of employees by analyzing social behavior of users on collaboration platforms, without touching end user privacy. These can give valuable predictions to the enterprises on emotional factors such as employee attrition.
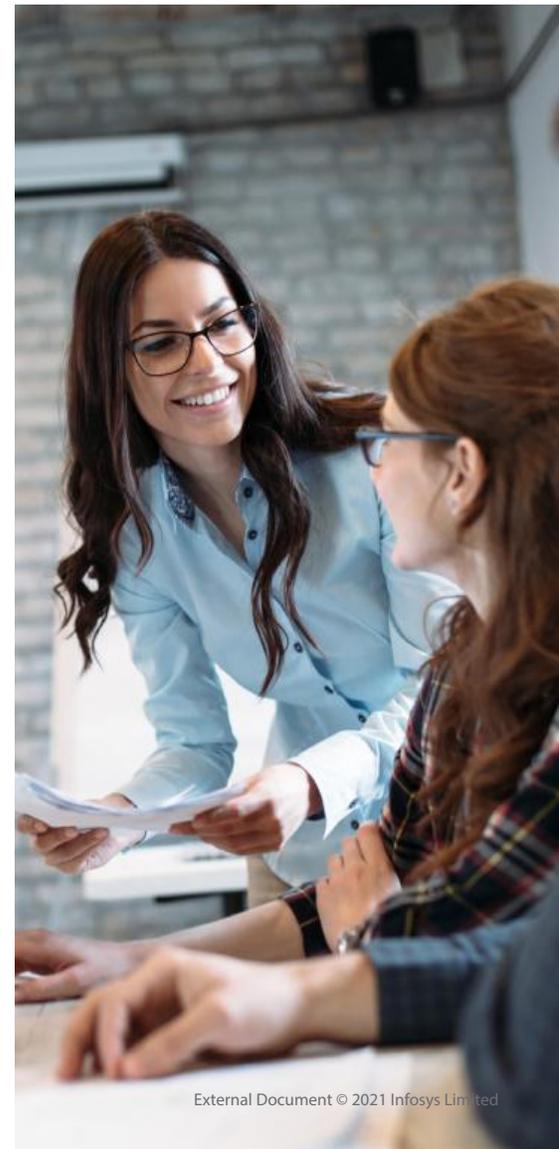
Now, let's take a look at the approach for cloud adoption in the EUC realm

Given the dynamics of the EUC realm and the variety of stakeholders involved, understanding where and how to begin cloud adoption can be challenging. Though it is largely dependent on the specific needs of an enterprise, the key steps for adoption are –

Envision

Having a broader enterprise level vision and roadmap, keeping in mind the existing challenges from current setup such as existing architecture, apps & data, ongoing upgrades, existing cloud subscriptions, enterprise policies, geographies, budgets.

Evaluate

Based on the vision & roadmap, a proof of concept (POC) on a potential choice of solutions and products must be conducted. The POC must include a go/ no-go criterion against various bench-marked parameters for the end users. Finally, a single or multiple product(s) that satisfies the requirements can be chosen.

Adopt by enabling & evolving people, process and technology

In the EUC realm in particular, communication plays a major role as most of the solution rollouts touch all the end users. So, it is natural to be prepared with appealing end user communication templates. Solution adoption in an enterprise can quickly become daunting if detailed process planning is not chalked out. Planning, when it comes to end users, is usually "ring" based; where a specific set of "early adopter" users are identified as part of the initial ring and are given access to the evaluated technical solution first. The solution is then rolled out to the next set of rings after gathering feedback from early adopters. A hyper-care support channel has to be established until the environment moves to steady state support. Remember, the ultimate goal is to have the end users adopt the next generation technology advancements with zero or minimal distraction.

Overall, exciting times ahead as these EUC components get welded to the cloud in the days and months to come.

Hit us back with your queries at workplacetrnsform@infosys.com

About the Author

Sai Kuricheti is a Senior IT professional with transnational insight, having performed a wide variety of roles across the globe, over a period of 15 years in the primary career focus area - "IT Transformation". He brings in the right blend of project management and technology flavor, having driven large teams achieve its technology goals. He holds an exceptional career history, with numerous endorsements, technology certifications and client recommendations. He has a strong academic foundation with MBA in Technology Management & Bachelors in Engineering.

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