

The modern data centre is software-defined

Global big data revenues are expected to grow to just under \$38 billion and cloud computing service revenues to more than \$4 billion in 2016 resulting in local companies rethinking their data centre strategies. Matthew Lee, regional manager for Africa at SUSE, looks at the growth of software-defined data centres in this landscape.



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“There are market and technology forces at play that are driving the evolution of the data centre. If companies are to remain relevant for their stakeholders, they need to be able to adapt to these changing data requirements. Not only is the role of data becoming more integral in the success of a business, but it has become an indispensable tool for interpreting and analysing the sheer amount of information at the disposal of decision-makers,” he says.

Virtualising infrastructure elements

In essence, software-defined data centres virtualise all elements of the infrastructure such as networking, storage, security, and processing power and runs it as a service. With the focus being on flexibility, scalability, and redundancy, the potential impact this will have on business models is significant.

“Inside the organisation, CIOs have to be even more responsive to new service demands than before. Given the pressure of ever-decreasing budgets, they no longer have the luxury of throwing resources at challenges if they have to start playing catch-up to their competitors. This means investment in technology is done based on how quickly it can benefit the organisation and how it aligns to the business strategy,” adds Lee.

What this boils down to is the fact that legacy applications alone are no longer good enough to meet the on-demand requirements of today’s digital business.

Software-defined data centre benefits

“One of the benefits of the software-defined data centre is the fact that it gives organisations complete control over their hosted environments and the associated resources utilised. And because many solutions are built on open source components, easier integration into many of the existing company processes and system are ensured. This minimises any potential disruption and gives decision-makers the peace of mind to remain focused on meeting their business deliverables,” says Lee.

This modern data centre also means companies get access to specialised applications that simplify tasks and provide them with competitive advantage. It extends to business models that are more flexible and cater for anything from pay-as-you-use models to self-service IT and the capacity to quickly scale up or down as business needs change.

“A digital business is required to be more agile when it comes to IT solutions than in the past. Across industry sectors, companies can ill afford to be stuck with a legacy approach only that is inflexible and cannot provide the innovation required to move beyond complexity. A virtualised approach addresses these issues. While understanding the importance of big data and the cloud was a first step, moving towards these more innovative data centres has to be the next,” concludes Lee.

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