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Reaching for the “cloud”: How SMEs can manage

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Abstract

Cloud computing is an emerging new computing paradigm for delivering computing services. The approach relies on a number of existing technologies e.g., the Internet, virtualization and grid computing. However, the provision of this service in a pay-as-you-go way through the popular medium of the Internet renders this computing service approach unique compared with currently available computing service modalities. This article highlights some aspects of this uniqueness and also explores some of the concerns that might be preventing some companies from adopting it. Notwithstanding these concerns, it is argued in this article that cloud computing is likely to prove commercially viable for many small and medium enterprises (SMEs) due to its flexibility and pay-as-you-go cost structure, particularly in the current climate of economic difficulties. A case study of a cloud experience by a British SME is also presented in this study in order to further highlight the perceived values of cloud computing in terms of cost and efficiency for real small enterprises.



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Keywords

Cloud computing; Web services; Virtualization; Grid computing; Small and medium enterprises (SMEs)

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Dr. Nabil Ahmed Sultan is an academic who graduated from the University of Liverpool with a PhD in Management in 1992. In 1996 he received his MSc in Information Systems from the same university. After a two-year working period for the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) as Programme Officer in Sana'a™ (Yemen) and Regional Programme Officer at the Arab Bureau in New York (USA) he moved on to work as a Programme Officer and Lecturer in IT and Business for the University of Liverpool's Centre for Continuing Education until 1998. From 1999 he worked as Programme Director and Senior Lecturer at Liverpool Hope University's Faculty of Business and Computer Science (now renamed the Faculty of Sciences and Social Sciences) where he developed and taught many successful modules and programmes and published many works on management and IT-related subjects.

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