Report unveils predictions for the future of multi-cloud

F5 Networks unveiled EMEA's first-ever Future of Multi-Cloud (FOMC) report, highlighting game-changing trends and charting adaptive best practice over the next five years.

The F5 commissioned report was conducted by the Foresight Factory, which drew on its proprietary bank of over 100 trends and original research across 25 regional markets. It also features exclusive qualitative interview input from influential global cloud experts specialising in entrepreneurialism, cloud architecture, business strategy, industry analysis, and relevant technological consultancy.

"The Future of Multi-Cloud report is a unique vision for how organisations can successfully navigate an increasingly intricate, cloud-centric world. The stakes are higher than ever, and businesses that ignore the power of the multi-cloud today will significantly struggle in the next five years," said Vincent Lavergne, RVP, Systems Engineering, F5 Networks.

The FOMC report comes at a time of significant cloud excitability.

According to the figures cited in the study, 81% of global enterprises claim to have a multi-cloud strategy in place. (1) Meanwhile, the Cisco Global Cloud Index estimates that 94% of workloads and compute instances will be processed by

cloud data centres by 2021. (2) Video streaming and social networking are major contributors to the ongoing rise; Netflix users alone consumed more than one billion hours of video content per week in 2017.(3)

The FOMC report is divided into five sections:

1. A new era of business innovation

While some FOMC experts disagree on certain aspects of cloud development, the consensus is that those delaying multi-cloud adoption will become increasingly irrelevant.

In the coming years, the FOMC report believes that upfront costs will become less important as cloud vendors continue to demonstrate compelling use cases. Technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning will be fundamental to driving higher levels of automation and render existing obstructions to multi-cloud obsolete.

> "The multi-cloud is a game-changer for both business and consumers. It will pave the way for unprecedented innovation, bringing cloud architects, DevOps, NetOps and SecOps together to pioneer transformational services traditional infrastructures simply cannot deliver. The outlook for the next five years is bright and full of potential," said Josh McBain, director of consultancy, Foresight Factory.

2. Driving unprecedent agility, efficiency, and cost savings

Corporate cloud literacy is becoming an operational prerequisite as technological progress accelerates in EMEA. With a multi-cloud strategy, enterprises can assign workloads to public clouds that are best suited for specific tasks, including speed, agility and security. If harnessed with intelligence and foresight, the expansive opportunities afforded by the multi-cloud will benefit bottom lines and earn customer trust through service excellence.

> "The whole process of digitalisation demands that you have the ability to seamlessly move between different forms of cloud, whether it is on-premises or off-premises or in the private or public cloud," said Arthur Goldstuck, a FOMC expert and managing director at World Wide Worx.

3. Plugging the skills gap

The FOMC report reveals how available workforces are still trailing technological developments and business requirements. Siloing of existing knowledge or lack of collaboration within businesses may further exacerbate multi-cloud apprehension and unfamiliarity.

"The need for technologically appropriate, value-adding expertise is reaching fever pitch," said McBain.

> *"The FOMC report is very much a rallying call for business leaders to tap into the kaleidoscopic potential of youth and promote industry diversity. It also calls on the IT industry to better promote the use of smart, context-driven and automated solutions that can spark attractive new career opportunities, as well as free up existing workforces for more strategic and rewarding work."*

4. Safeguarding the future and building trust

Today's attack surfaces are expanding at a staggering pace, with both cybercriminals and their tools becoming increasingly sophisticated and destructive. Concurrently, the spread of multi-cloud architectures, if inadequately managed, is resulting in application sprawls and soaring security complexity.

Against this backdrop, the FOMC report emphasises the importance of being able to quickly develop and deploy scalable applications and services on any platform, anywhere and at any time. Implementing a robust, future-proofed ecosystem of integrated security and cloud solutions helps build end-to-end IT services that give key stakeholders greater context, control, and visibility into the threat landscape.

5. Coping with compliance

The EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is the most comprehensive and far-reaching piece of legislation of its kind. However, the FOMC report concludes it is not enough in the long term, and that a global standard for data protection is required within five years.

The intricacies of regulating a borderless digital world is one of the biggest challenges facing governments worldwide. Swift collaborative action between business and government is needed. Meanwhile, businesses need to stay compliant with existing legislation, which is further complicated by cloud computing's growing influence.

"Eventually, today's tech-conscious consumers and customers will only want to be associated with the most trustworthy data handlers. There is now a big opportunity to differentiate with best practice and service delivery, particularly in the context multi-cloud's potential," said McBain.

Infrastructure variables can also impact on multi-cloud uptake, including the availability of data centres and bandwidth reliability. For example, the FOMC report found that Middle Eastern and African business tend to have different multi-cloud configurations than most Western markets.

"Every country has got very specific dynamics around the embrace of cloud. The phrase that we use is 'cloud is not a country'. The benefits are experienced very differently by different markets," Goldstuck explained.

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