

Solving the cloud conundrum

FOR THE BROADCAST AND ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

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WHILE CLOUD PRODUCTS AND SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE TO A WIDE RANGE OF INDUSTRIES, THE BROADCAST MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT (M&E) INDUSTRY HAS PROVEN TO BE A CHALLENGING VERTICAL TO ADDRESS. HOWEVER, THERE ARE ADVANTAGES FOR BOTH VENDORS AND END USERS WHO ARE WILLING TO UNDERTAKE THE TECHNICAL COMPLEXITY OF MIGRATING FILE-BASED AND LIVE PRODUCTION WORKFLOWS INTO THE CLOUD.

A new report from Futuresource Consulting provides a strategic assessment of how the market landscape is developing, the applications for cloud by sub-vertical and end-user attitudes to the adoption of cloud-based workflows.

ACCELERATED CLOUD ADOPTION HAS CAUSED COMPLICATIONS

“During 2020, the pandemic forced many organisations to move to the cloud for business continuity purposes,” says Joyce Wang, Lead Analyst, Futuresource Consulting. “But necessary haste, and the accelerated rate of adoption, meant that some solutions were chosen piecemeal, rather than considered as part of a wider infrastructure migration.

“Now, with more time to review and consider cloud usage, there is scope to establish optimised deployments. Vendors have also had time to refine products so their tools can better integrate with the needs of the M&E industry.”

PRICING STRUCTURES ARE STILL THE PRIMARY OBSTACLE

While issues with latency, duplication of assets and moving large files and data remain pain points for the industry, vendors are making headway in addressing these concerns, which is encouraging more widespread use. Yet the latest round of Futuresource research

shows that technical decision makers still expect surprise bills and cost shocks when moving to the cloud.

“In the M&E industry, public cloud providers are perceived to have complex pricing structures that make it difficult to track and monitor cloud spend,” says Wang. “Many people we’ve talked to expressed a desire to see a pricing structure that’s relevant to this industry, such as hours of use or days of use to correspond with event planning and coverage. The reality is that for many end users, monitoring cloud spend and optimising usage almost becomes a job in itself.”

GROWING ENGAGEMENT AND A BALANCED APPROACH TO CLOUD

Despite the challenges, there is growing end-user engagement with the cloud across the video content supply chain. Many of the uses for cloud-native products are based on transitioning production workflows into the cloud, and this will continue to fuel opportunities for new startups, brands and products to penetrate the vertical.

Established broadcast technology vendors have also started to launch cloud-native products. However, their greatest competitive advantage lies in integrating existing products and services from on-premise and private cloud instances into public cloud workflows.

This places a greater emphasis on developing connectivity and orchestration for products to interface efficiently with the cloud. For startups, opportunities within the cloud and SaaS market often lie in solving existing pain points or coming up with new solutions to drive improvements in workflow efficiencies.

A STRATEGIC CLOUD FUTURE

“Our primary research shows that end users in the M&E industry universally recognise the common benefits of the cloud,” says Wang. “The flexibility and scalability that cloud provides, the reductions in CapEx, and enhanced access to a global talent pool. These are all convincing and frequently cited arguments. Then there’s the improved disaster recovery and the ability to support remote production. All are strong drivers for organisations to move part of their video content supply chain to the cloud.

“Yet organisations still have concerns, and these have led to many aspects of the video content supply chain remaining on premise. Those that have experimented with cloud now have greater confidence knowing that not everything needs to be lifted into the cloud right now. In the meantime, cloud products can be used strategically where it is most advantageous.”

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