

**A Primer on Cloud Computing – Q&A with Avner Algom, Israeli Association of Grid Technologies (IGT)
Member of OGF-Europe's Industry Expert Group**



Avner Algom, Managing Director of the Israeli Association of Grid Technologies (IGT) is a prime mover in the 'CloudScape', evaluating benefits and barriers across a broad spectrum of sectors and host of the highly successful annual international conferences – the

World Summit of Cloud Computing – in Israel. In this Q&A with Avner, we take a look at the latest trends in cloud computing in the public and private sectors and what we can expect to see moving forward.

Attended by over 500 people from enterprise, government and research, the World Summit of Cloud Computing, 2-3 December 2009 brought together major players from industry and technology leaders, such as CTOs and CIOs, to deliver insights into the landscape.

Q: Avner, how would you sum up the main outcomes of the 2009 Summit?

The event helped demonstrate how cloud computing will be the main focus in the IT world in the next ten years, influencing the economy as the Fortune 1000 companies move into the 'CloudScape'. Large companies are transforming their internal structure as we move away from hardware to 'Platform, Infrastructure and Software as a Service' deployment models to cope with new business solutions. On the other hand, we are seeing large investments in cloud computing developments. Good cases in point include Microsoft's Azure as a service infrastructure, IBM investing similar amounts and leading players like Amazon.com and Google. But this is just the tip of the iceberg.



Attendants at the World Summit of Cloud Computing, Dec '09

Q: What was the main message and pointers for the SME community as prime beneficiaries of cloud computing?

Cloud computing is bringing about a major change for start-ups and SMEs. We are seeing three major strands of change here. Start-ups involved in competitive R&D will be among the major users of cloud computing infrastructures, benefitting from cheaper services to test their new product, services and solutions. In terms of

regular business, as opposed to R&D, there are two major developments. Firstly, businesses will be run as Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) as an alternative to current software packages to reduce overheads. Accounting is one example of these new developments. The other key development concerns communities sharing information and joint applications to lower costs. Travel agents are one example of this kind of usage leveraging one cloud provider to share information of common interest to reduce the overall costs to the community.



Keynote at the Cloud Summit

Q: Ranit Zexer, CTO, Matrix gave a talk on "Keep your head in the Clouds and keep your feet on the Ground. How can CIOs build a pragmatic cloud roadmap with quick wins today and strategic thinking ahead, that is, in terms of the pragmatic steps, value-add and strategies moving forward?"

There are various stages involved here. Today CIOs need more analyses to understand the current status of competitive IT and IT projects. The second aspect is understanding how to benefit from cloud computing with issues such as security and regulation, which can interfere with the adoption of a public cloud, as well as issues like cloud computing and the data centre. There is therefore a need to understand which models best enable economic solutions in the private data centre and for public clouds.

Regarding large companies, regulation is an even bigger issue. Pragmatically speaking, large enterprises should gain a deep understanding the new phenomena of cloud computing, mapping business applications with what is relevant on cloud computing or replacing current services and packages, for example, email services to lower costs. Key questions that must be answered before adoption takes place concern security and reliability. These are processes that all kinds of companies are considering to optimise costs, with legal and security issues firmly in mind. So the trend today is to study the new reality and build a roadmap for corporate management indicating benefits, risks and the costs involved.

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