Clouds are here to stay

NAHID AKHTER

The occasional downpours of the season and cloudy skies make the topic of 'Cloud Computing' a good one to discuss. Cloud computing is all the rage now. "It's become the phrase du jour," says Gartner senior analyst Ben Pring. Let's say you're an executive at a large corporation. Your particular responsibilities include making sure that all of your employees have the right hardware and software they need to do their jobs. Buying computers for everyone isn't enough -- you also have to purchase software or software licenses to give employees the tools they require. Whenever you have a new hire, you have to buy more software or make sure your current software license allows another user.

So what if, instead of installing a suite of software for each computer, you'd only have to load one application. That application would allow workers to log into a Web-based service which hosts all the programs the user would need for his or her job? Wouldn't that make you job much easier, not to mention the money it would save you?

As a metaphor for the internet, "the cloud" is a familiar cliché, but when combined with "computing," the meaning gets bigger and fuzzier. Some analysts and vendors define cloud computing narrowly as an updated version of utility computing: basically virtual servers available over the internet. Others go very broad, arguing anything you consume outside the firewall is "in the cloud," including conventional outsourcing.

Cloud computing encompasses any subscription-based or pay-per-use service that, in real time over the internet, extends IT's existing capabilities.

There's a good chance you've already used some form of cloud computing. If you have an e-mail account with a Web-based e-mail service like Hotmail, Yahoo! Mail or Gmail, then you've had some experience with cloud computing. Instead of running an e-mail program on your computer, you log in to a Web e-mail account remotely. The software and storage for your account doesn't exist on your computer -- it's on the service's computer cloud.

Cloud computing is at an early stage, with a handful of providers large and small delivering cloud-based services, from full-blown applications to storage services to spam filtering.

Two big companies this year have announced the launch of their cloud computing systems.

Microsoft Corp. announced Microsoft Office 365, the company's next generation in cloud productivity that brings together Microsoft Office, SharePoint Online, Exchange Online and Lync Online in an always-up-to-date cloud service. Office 365 makes it easier for organisations to get and use Microsoft's business productivity solutions via the cloud. With Office 365, people can work together more easily from anywhere on virtually any device, while collaborating with others inside and outside their organisation in a simple and highly secure way. Microsoft has also opened a limited beta program for Office 365 in 13 countries and regions.

Office 365 for enterprises introduces choices for midsize and large businesses as well as government organisations, starting for a small charge per user, per month. Office 365 for enterprises also includes the option to get Microsoft Office Professional Plus desktop software on a pay-as-you-go basis, for the first time.

On the other hand, Apple has introduced its iCloud, which comes free with its iOS 5. A sort of 'hard drive in the sky' as the iCloud advertorial puts it, It provides a way to access everything on all your devices. iCloud stores your content so it's always accessible wirelessly from your iPad, iPhone, iPod touch, Mac, or PC. It gives you instant access to your music, apps, latest photos, and more. And it keeps your email, contacts, and calendars up to date across all your devices. No syncing required. No management required. When you update your iPhone, iPad, or iPod touch to iOS 5, your Apple apps become seamlessly integrated with iCloud. So all your content and information is available and up to date, no matter which device you're using.

There r various types of cloud computing available, like Saas(Software as a Service) or Utility Computing and MSPs (Managed Service Providers).

The SaaS type of cloud computing delivers a single application through the browser to thousands of customers using a multitenant architecture. On the customer side, it means no up-front investment in servers or software licensing; on the provider side, with just one app to maintain, costs are low compared to conventional hosting.

There are many reasons for organisations to move from traditional IT infrastructure to Cloud Computing . Today, with such cloud-based interconnection seldom in evidence, cloud computing might be more accurately described as "sky computing," with many isolated clouds of services which IT customers must plug into individually. On the other hand, as virtualisation permeate the enterprise, the idea of loosely coupled services running on an agile, scalable infrastructure should eventually make every enterprise a node in the cloud. It's a long-running trend with a far-out horizon. But among big trends, cloud computing is the hardest one to argue with in the long term.

Well, with the summer heat beating at us nowadays, here's wishing the 'clouds' pour down on us pun intended.

Next-gen internet addresses tested

A worldwide test was under way on Wednesday of the next generation of internet addresses designed to replace the dwindling pool of 4.3 billion unique identifiers in the original system.

Hundreds of companies, organisations and institutions around the world are taking part in "World IPv6 Day," including internet giants such as Facebook, Google, Microsoft and Yahoo!

Internet Protocol version 6 is the new system of unique identifying numbers for websites, computers and other internet-connected gadgets and is replacing the original addressing system, IPv4, which is nearing exhaustion.

IPv6 provides more than four billion times more addresses than IPv4 -- more addresses, for example, than there are grains of sand on Earth.

The number of available IPv4 addresses will run out later this year and the transition to IPv6 is needed to keep pace with the explosive growth in internet use.

US networking company Cisco forecast in a report released this month that the number of devices connected to the internet will top more than 15 billion by the year 2015, more than double the world's population.

Web users, for the most part, will be oblivious to the switch to IPv6 since an IP address such as 74.125.71.103, for example, will still appear in the address bar as google.com.
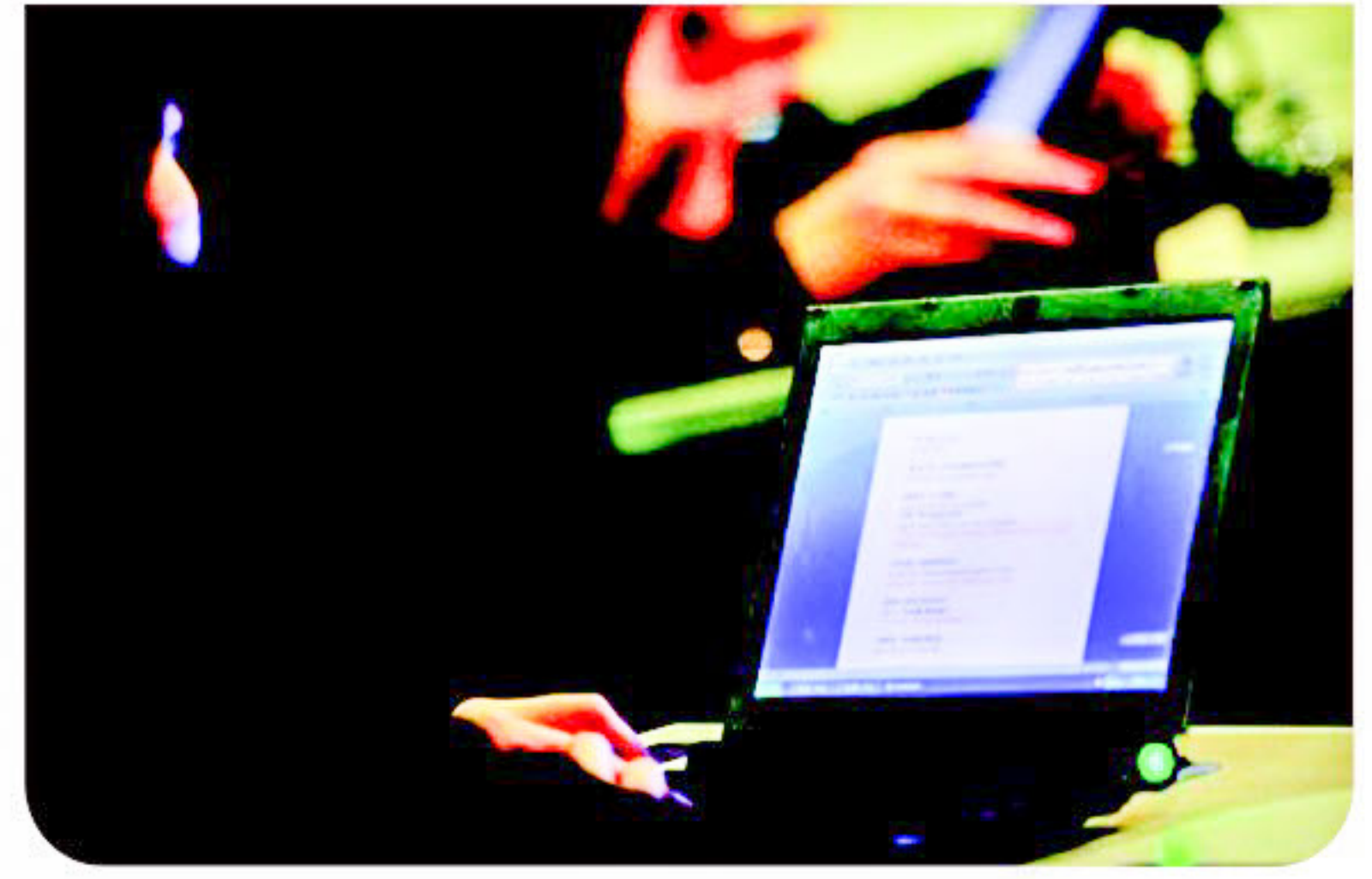
Google, which is enabling IPv6 on Google Search, Gmail, YouTube and other services, said "the vast majority (99.95 percent) of people will be able to access services without interruption" during the IPv6 test, which began at 0000 GMT Wednesday and is to last for 24 hours.

"Either they'll connect over IPv6, or their systems will successfully fall back to IPv4," Google network engineer Lorenzo Colitti said in a blog post.

Colitti estimated that 0.05 percent of systems may fail to fall back to IPv4, making Google, Facebook, Yahoo!, Bing and other participating websites "slow or unresponsive."

Facebook network engineer Donn Lee said World IPv6 Day "will enable the industry to gain insights about potential IPv6 issues, find solutions, and accelerate global adoption of IPv6."

The change to IPv6 mainly impacts internet service providers, websites and network operators who have to make sure their systems can handle the new online addresses and properly route traffic.

Galaxy Ace arrives this week

IT.TELECOM DESK

Samsung Electronics, a consumer electronic giant, is going to introduce Samsung Galaxy Ace, the new member in the galaxy family, in the local market this week, says a press release.

Galaxy series of the Samsung shows that smartphones can cater to any lifestyle, with enhanced multimedia and application capabilities as well as a social hub keeping users in touch with friends and family. Each device in the series has been created to meet unique needs and allows users to share the fun and excitement in their lives with friends and family.

Built on Android 2.2 (Froyo), the Galaxy Ace has wide 3.5" display and has been designed for trendy and sociable young professionals.

The phone also comes with Android Market and features one-page layout for phonebook, SNS, IM and email.

Its Quicktype by SWYPE lets you input data faster by swiping finger across the keys and the with ThinkFree application, users can edit, view and create Microsoft Word, Excel and Powerpoint documents.

The Voice Search feature allows searching whatever is wanted from Google by saying the search word.

The phone also features 5MP camera with LED Flash, 2GB free memory which is also expandable up to 32GB, 800 MHz processor; 1350 mAh battery, Wi-Fi 802.11 b/g/n, BT 2.1, USB 2.0, GPS

The Samsung Galaxy Ace has a price tag of Tk 27,900.

Qubee laptop fair opens today

IT.TELECOM DESK

The 'Qubee Summer Laptop Fair 2011' starts today at the Bangabandhu International Conference Center (BICC) in the capital, says a press release.

State Minister for Science and ICT Yeafesh Osman is expected to inaugurate the three-day fair at 10am.

The fair will be open from 10am-8pm every day and it will end on June 12. Entry fee has been fixed at Tk 20.

Qubee, HP, Samsung, Computer source, Executive Technologies and more are taking part in the fair with 13 pavilions and 45 stalls.

The three-day fair will also have seminar sessions on various ICT issues.

Qubee, a leading 4G internet service provider in the country, is the title sponsor of the fair.

Microsoft demonstrates new SQL server

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Microsoft Bangladesh on June 7 showcased Microsoft SQL Server 2008R2, the latest edition of its world class database platform at an event in the capital.

With the new SQL server the Microsoft takes the database solutions in a new height with its unique technological advantages and sets up the solid foundation for today's highly demanding enterprise database concepts like, Data warehousing, Data mining, Business Intelligence, High availability etc. with multi-terabytes very large databases (VLDB).

Kian Ng, lead solution sales professional for Microsoft Application Platform, Microsoft Asia Pacific, delivered the key note presentation and demonstrated the solutions at the event.

The SQL Server 2008 R2 helps people derive the most value from information at the lowest total-cost-of-ownership with high levels of performance, availability and security, employ more productive management and development tools and deliver pervasive insight with self-service business intelligence (BI).

It also features support for large-scale data centers and data warehouses, opportunities to build and extend applications in the cloud and integration with the Microsoft Application Platform.

Nokia's CTO 'quits over strategy'

Nokia's head of technology has taken a leave of absence and is not coming back over disagreement over a new group strategy, Finland's leading daily Helsingin Sanomat reported on Thursday.

"Two independent sources for the Helsingin Sanomat say Rich Green will be gone until the end of the year and is unlikely to return to Nokia," the paper reported.

Nokia, the leading world maker of mobile phones, confirmed to AFP that Green "had taken leave to attend to a personal matter," but did not provide further details or a date for his return.

The newspaper's unnamed sources said Green disagreed with a decision by Nokia to scrap plans for its Meego operating system, an open-source platform co-operation with Intel which was eventually supposed to replace the Symbian platform in Nokia smartphones.

Dell unveils new products

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Dell, world's leading computer manufacturer, has announced 24 new business computing solutions and form factors, including laptops, tablets, desktops and workstation computers in Bangladesh market, one of the largest ever introductions in the company's history, says a press release.

On the occasion, Andreas Diantoro, managing director, Dell South Asia & Developing Marketing Group said the company is proud to announce this new portfolio of products that deliver secure, manageable and reliable solutions along with great new designs.

Mir Saadat Ali, country manager, Dell Bangladesh said the new solutions include the Dell Latitude E5420, E5520, E6220, E6320, E6420, E6520 and E6420 ATG laptops. The company also introduced Dell OptiPlex 990, 790 and 390 desktops as well as an OptiPlex Small Form Factor All-in-One Solution. The new solutions also have Dell Precision T1600 desktop workstation and Dell Precision M6600 and M4600 mobile workstations.