

Top Data Center Trends of 2011 - IO



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With 2010 just about over, it's time to look forward to next year and the opportunities and challenges the upcoming 12 months will present. As always, data center technologies and data practices are evolving rapidly, making it essential for executives and managers to monitor changes in a variety of different areas.

To help you along, here's a quick overview of the trends you'll want to keep an eye on as we march into 2011:

Virtualization: There aren't many data centers left that haven't already accomplished some level of server consolidation. Savings in floor space and support costs makes adopting the server virtualization something close to a no-brainer. Yet in these difficult economic times, many enterprises are now looking to extend virtualization's benefits to other areas. That's why 2011 will see more businesses virtualizing storage, network components, desktops and other basic technologies and platforms.

Cloud Computing: Like virtualization, cloud computing is already a well established data center trend. Cloud computing makes IT applications and other resources instantly and dynamically available, regardless of location. The technology also makes it possible to quickly and efficiently create, configure, provision and add computing power in support of IT and business services. Additionally, cloud computing can enhance SOA, information management and service management initiatives. For all of these reasons, and more, cloud computing will continue to be a major data center trend during the upcoming year.

Data Center as a Service (DCaaS™): More businesses in 2011 will begin viewing their data center as an infinitely scalable and always available service. This approach makes sense from both technical and business perspectives. By treating its **data center as a service**, a business can free its IT and network operations from geographical limitations, eliminate the need for major upfront infrastructure investments, more easily project future costs and

evaluate different configurations within a flexible, reliable and efficient environment. There are many other benefits, too.

Lower Spending: No matter which direction the economy heads in next year, IT organizations will spend less on servers, storage and other systems as a percentage of their operational budget. Thanks to declining hardware costs, outsourcing and better utilization of assets through virtualization and other strategies, businesses stand to get a bigger bang for their IT buck in 2011.

Mainframe Migration and Consolidation: Mainframe computers continue to play an important role in many data centers, particularly in facilities used by government agencies and businesses in fields such as banking, finance and insurance. Yet time is finally catching up with big iron. Mainframes' remaining cost and performance benefits are rapidly diminishing, particularly in data centers where the machines are used in association with other classes of servers. Therefore, for many current mainframe users, 2011 will be the year when they begin migrating their mainframe applications to other server platforms or, at a minimum, start planning a mainframe server consolidation strategy.

Data Center Outsourcing: Interest in **outsourcing data center operations**, completely or partially, will increase as today's challenging economy forces enterprises in virtually all sectors to continue paying close attention to budgets and overhead. As 2011 arrives, CIOs and IT managers need to be aware of new and evolving options for outsourcing and carefully investigate the pros and cons of providers and their service offerings.

Network Services Outsourcing: Non-carrier-aligned data network services outsourcing is a strategy that's certain to gain momentum during the next 12 months. Better network availability, more carrier choice, enhanced routing flexibility, improved QoS and lower costs are just some of the reasons why more businesses will turn to independent **network services** providers during 2011.

Data Center Automation: Data center automation is becoming a high-priority issue for a steadily rising number of enterprises. The appeal is two-pronged: automation improves service levels while freeing funds for reinvestment in critical infrastructure areas. With the proliferation of low-cost servers, 24/7 operational demands and data center consolidation, integrated service management automation is becoming an essential tool for streamlining operations and ensuring reliability. Automation is also vital for fulfilling the promises of virtualization, SOA and other data center services and platforms that are the hallmarks of an adaptive, flexible enterprise.

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