The Hybrid Cloud Approach Makes Most Sense Says Analyst
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At this point in time private and public clouds are gaining the most attention. Companies are looking at either deploying their own cloud infrastructure and data in self-hosted data centers, or companies are looking to take advantage of elasticity and price that public cloud can provide them. These two approaches seem to be the most common or a variation of them. However, a hybrid approach is also gaining ground and at least according to some analysts, it will one day be the ideal way to deploy cloud technologies.

I recently interviewed David Linthicum, who is the CTO and founder of cloud consulting company Blue Mountain Labs. He told me that a lot of what is being referred to as the hybrid approach is not really what hybrid cloud computing is all about. Companies, particularly large enterprises, are finding use for both cloud models, but the models are not inter-connected and resources are not shared. They essentially serve separate functions within the companies utilizing them.

"You do not see much hybrid cloud computing out there today," he said. "This is being able to move data between instances that you control within your own private cloud and instances of the public cloud. This model, when leveraged correctly, is the ideal solution."

Linthicum pointed out that the model makes great use of various cloud advantages (both private and public) – such as almost unlimited scalability, security, privacy of data, and value the public cloud provides.

This hybrid flexibility is still lacking within the cloud world, but Linthicum is optimistic for the future. This is the ideal solution of the future, although companies like Amazon have financial interests in pushing the public approach.

Linthicum pointed out that Amazon has been adamant in pushing back against the private cloud approach, which you can probably guess ties to the company's philosophy and financial incentive in pushing the cloud. However, he thinks that if Amazon -- who he said is the 800-pound gorilla in IaaS right now – was to offer a solid hybrid approach, it would do it with Eucalyptus. This makes sense, as Eucalyptus advertises compatibility with Amazon Web Services (AWS) on the [company's own website](http://www.eucalyptus.com/why-eucalyptus) (http://www.eucalyptus.com/why-eucalyptus).

"Eucalyptus is open source software for building AWS-compatible private and hybrid clouds," the website headline reads.

Eucalyptus' website and philosophy seems to tie in with what Linthicum has been saying about a true hybrid approach: The ability to move resources freely between the clouds without hassle:

"Eucalyptus recognizes that successful private and hybrid clouds often depend upon an ecosystem of solutions working together, and Eucalyptus has built this ecosystem with its partner programs."

Linthicum thinks that the reason you do not really see much true hybrid cloud out there today is due to how complex creating such architecture is and how costly it can be.

"You have security models spanning outside and inside enterprise," he said. "You have integration that needs to occur. You also have two different platforms running similar data. It is a complex distributed system that exists between infrastructure that you own and infrastructure that you don't own."

The hybrid approach really offers the best of both worlds and is a great way for companies to utilize the cloud to the fullest. It can combat many fears companies have when deploying to the cloud like lock-in scenarios and compliance issues of not knowing where certain data is hosted. However, it is also a field that is lagging behind the private and public approaches as it is more complex to implement.

True hybrid cloud can make use of resources working between both private and public cloud data centers rather than have separations of computing power and data hosting. We can hope more companies will offer sound hybrid approaches as providers and the integration between the private and public clouds will get smoother over time.

Linthicum founded a cloud consulting firm called Blue Mountain Labs. The company, he said, works with enterprises, such as Audible.com and Best Buy, as well as government agencies, such as the military.