

ONE

ORACLE MAGAZINE FOR MIDSIZE COMPANIES



Major IT buyers increase investment

According to IDC, global IT spending rose to around US\$ 895 billion in 2014, with about US\$ 45.3 billion, or 5% of the total investment attributable to 10 enterprises.

Modern Best Practices

Oracle collects templates for IT-supported business processes. Page 2

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Cloud computing: SMEs need flexible services

Although the advantages of cloud computing have been proven in countless practical applications, many companies are still distancing themselves from it. However, they could pay dearly as a result.



Cloud computing has clear, measurable advantages for companies: It can facilitate flexible and rapid IT development, cut infrastructure and upgrade costs and also simplify IT management requirements. Yet SMEs in particular have strong reservations about using cloud services, as evidenced by several studies conducted in

the last few months. A recent survey of 200 German companies by TecChannel's editorial team found nearly a third of SMEs are currently using cloud services, while nearly a fifth plan to start using cloud computing in the next twelve months. That leaves 42% of companies that do not currently use the cloud, nor plan to do so in the near future. Acceptance varies

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from country to country, but the findings are broadly similar. Surveys conducted by Zyxel and workforce management provider Kronos, for example, found that in the Netherlands, only a quarter of companies use cloud-based applications. In the Czech Republic, this figure was even lower, at just 15%. And in those companies that already work with the cloud, only a third (34%) of employees said that cloud applications are being used “excellently” or “to the max”.

The ongoing trend towards digitalisation and networking – which virtually all business processes and models now leverage across all industry sectors – increases the importance of cloud computing. Vendors have developed specialist solutions to optimise networks and data traffic (known as Content Delivery Network) while enabling a high degree of process automation at the same time. Customers benefit from practically unlimited scalability while their applications work across all locations and devices.

In the coming years, customers will continue to expect more relevant services from SMEs. Without cloud support, companies may struggle to continue providing such services efficiently.

Process management: Oracle Modern Best Practices Portal

New technologies can enable more efficient processes, but this transformation may often require a change in mindset. Familiar best practices are suddenly under scrutiny or may even be considered out dated. A new resource centre now aggregates information on modern best practices for building agile business processes into one cross-sector platform.

One of a company’s biggest challenges is to reduce complexity and cut costs. The ideal solution is to standardise recurrent business processes. Defining optimal processes cannot be made on the basis of previous experience but rather on the basis of future business needs. Many processes such as reporting have been around for years, but the way in which companies generate their reports does change over time.

There is currently a particularly big transformation underway, triggered by the virtually simultaneous emergence of technologies such as cloud, mobile, social, analytics, big data and the Internet of Things (IoT). Oracle now provides its customers with information on current best practices that incorporate all these technologies, via the Oracle Modern Best Practice portal (oracle.com/modern-best-practice). These best practices describe standardised processes and are based on the latest requirements.

The articles, videos and presentations on the Modern Best Practice portal are organised into categories: finance and procurement, service, sales, marketing, human capital management (HCM) and talent management, as well as commerce, innovation and logistics. Additional business process categories will be added in the coming months, as well as additional information relating to special projects and sales development.

More information: oracle.com/modern-best-practice

Mobility: Company devices are more affordable to procure



The use of tablets and smartphones is increasing rapidly. Whether the company provides mobile devices or the employee buy the device directly, many organisations reimburse their employees for the acquisition cost or pay for some of the fees.

Smartphones are normally replaced every two years and tablets every three years according to a study carried out by Experton. The early replacement of smartphones is usually caused by theft, accidental damage or losing the device. The study found that business costs increase when a company chooses to subsidise employee devices. This cost increase can be explained by the significantly better terms and conditions that businesses are able to secure with their chosen suppliers.

Research Collaboration Award: Darmstadt University

A team of scientists led by Eric Bodden, Professor of Computer Science at Darmstadt University of Technology and Head of Secure Software Engineering at the Fraunhofer Institute for Secure Information Technology (SIT), and Mira Mezini, Professor of Software Engineering at Darmstadt University of Technology, have received Oracle's Research Collaboration Award. The winning project on the automatic detection of security gaps in Java Runtime, has earned the institute an endowment of €73,000.

The project involves further development of the FlowTwist framework, which was used to analyse the causes of known vulnerabilities in the Java Runtime library and was already backed by Oracle in 2014. FlowTwist automatically detects security gaps without depending on the assistance of a developer.

This award-winning project aims to improve the analysis software in order to detect further types of vulnerability. The project also seeks to develop a secure alternative to the current level of access control in Java's standard library that will verify the origin of the program code being executed before security-critical operations are permitted to access it.

Digital transformation: Partner platform making IT projects more manageable

Oracle and Accenture have jointly launched the Accenture Oracle Business Group, which offers business customers faster implementation of integrated cloud solutions than ever before.

Cloud services will be delivered on the existing Accenture Foundation Platform for Oracle (AFPO). The services offered cover a range of enterprise grade, pre-integrated cloud solutions. Other business building blocks, such as Service Oriented Architecture (SOA), Business Intelligence (BI), and Identity Management (IM), will also be added over time. This platform offers users of standard adapters and industry-specific extensions for Software as a Service and Platform as a Service from Oracle. The implementation of mission-critical, end-to-end services can now be managed in a single manageable step. Or in other words, the IT architecture is ready to leverage from day one.

Oracle Database 12c: Upgrading makes databases cloud-ready

One of the major benefits of upgrading to Oracle Database 12c is the new Multitenant option which makes databases easier to use and opens up a path to the cloud for companies.

Oracle Multitenant delivers a new database architecture that lets users run multiple pluggable databases (PDBs) in one multi-client-capable container database (CDB). The PDBs share the available memory and access the same background processes. They can also quickly and easily plug into the CDB, and unplug again as required.

This gives you the option of consolidating several databases in one CDB. You can also clone databases, move them from one CDB to another or patch them, all in a matter of seconds.

The Multitenant option is ideal for connecting a database system with the cloud. Companies can develop and test new applications as a PDB in a cloud-based CDB. As soon as the software is verified as production ready, it can be easily transferred to an on-premise installation of Database 12c.

The Oracle Enterprise Manager – for which Version 13 was recently released – is a fantastic management tool. It supports administrators with a standard console for database management, both on site and in the cloud. Administrators can use it to install a PDB plug-in for the cloud container, subsequently remove the PDB and plug it into the CDB on site.

In addition to Oracle Multitenant, there are other good reasons for upgrading to Oracle Database 12c, such as the In-Memory option or the combination of Heat Map and Automatic Data Optimisation (ADO).

Many companies still defer upgrading, often making the decision before all relevant questions about the conversion process have been adequately resolved. An excellent source of information is Mike Dietrich's Oracle database upgrade blog: <http://blogs.oracle.com/UPGRADE>

Mike travels throughout Europe meeting customers and hosting Database 12c workshops. See his blog for upcoming workshop dates. He also answers questions online in German and English, publishes tips and hints, and provides links to whitepapers, presentations and other documents about the Database 12c upgrade process.

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Market research: High growth rate for IaaS

Worldwide expenditure on Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) is forecast to rise to US\$16.5 billion in 2015, according to a recent survey by market research institute Gartner.

This constitutes a 32.8% increase compared to 2014. Gartner predicts average annual growth of 29.1% for the period 2014 to 2019. Analysts are also observing a consolidation taking place where IaaS offerings are becoming limited to just a few

global providers, while many smaller providers are withdrawing from the market or restructuring their services. This trend is emerging despite the fact that IaaS continues to be of great interest to customers. According to Gartner's 2015 CIO Agenda, 83% of CIOs said that IaaS could potentially be an option for their company while for 10% of CIOs, it is already a standard infrastructure model.

Gartner's survey on IaaS is available on its website, under the title "Magic Quadrant for Cloud Infrastructure as a Service Worldwide", for US\$1,995 (registration required).

Digitalisation: Information innovation for public transport

Travellers now access a whole range of online services unheard of a few years ago. Transportation companies now prefer passengers to buy tickets from machines as the latest models don't just issue tickets, but also offer customers information and can take reservations.

When the first transportation company websites appeared in the mid 1990s, they included very basic information about connections and fares. These sites have grown into extensive travel and mobility portals for customers to access from any location.

Apps for mobile devices now identify your current location and display the latest travel news in that area. Local and national transport companies are currently working on user-friendly solutions for buying tickets on your smartphone. At the start of 2015, the Berliner Verkehrsbetriebe (BVG - Berlin Transport Company) was already selling up to 2,000 tickets via smartphone apps every day.

Information systems featuring departure screens with live data streamed directly from the transport network are now also widely available. The scheduled position of vehicles is compared with their actual location and arrival times at the various stops are calculated from the difference – a typical machine-to-machine (M2M) application.

Surveys testify to the success of this change in technology: 82% of London Bus' passengers now feel well informed (a year ago this was just 79%). This demonstrates how companies can successfully navigate the IT transition from the offline to the online world.

Cloud Computing: Hybrid complexity creates vulnerabilities

Data security is now much more difficult to achieve than it was two years ago. That is what 57 % of companies had to say in a recent study conducted by the ESG (Enterprise Strategy Group). The main reasons are the number of networked devices (66%), the increase in data traffic (56%) and new applications (51%).

Explaining the results of their survey, the ESG states that many companies require heterogeneous cloud solutions, which in turn often lead to security measures that are both complex and confusing. 52% of the companies surveyed operate between 51 and 150 firewalls with a range of between ten and several hundred rules to ensure smooth operation and constant data security.

The results paper can be downloaded as a PDF for free from Tufin, who commissioned the survey.

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Mobility: Competent users take the best security precautions

Today, we would be lost at work without smartphones, tablets and notebooks. Some companies provide mobile devices that they manage and secure directly. Other companies allow employees to use their own devices. However, they all hope that no one leaves their mobile lying under a newspaper in a cafe.

The security of enterprise data accessible from mobile devices is now less a question of technology – there is a broad range of solutions with options for remote deletion, VPN access, biometric access control and fully encapsulated app containers for practically every scenario. It is often employee actions that have the most impact on the security of the company’s data.

The principle of minimisation is often underestimated. To avoid major data losses, employees should save as little confidential information as possible on their mobile device and, as an extra precaution, delete older projects. Other absolute musts are regular backups and suitable encryption, as well as secure passwords and up-to-date virus scans. Where possible, the relevant hardware’s security features should also be utilised.

Also, let’s not forget the apps. While apps are easy to install, each installation on a mobile device carries the potential risk of exposure to spyware and malware.

Unfortunately, no security precautions work when a user is careless with their devices. Loud telephone conversations at the airport or trade fairs are often unintentionally overheard. Mobile devices are notoriously prone to theft, damage and loss. Special awareness programmes that aim to make mobile device users more aware of data security risks are proving successful in changing behaviours. Such training courses may reduce the number of data security incidents in a company by half.



Big data: Predictive analytics improve decision making

Documents, transactions, online connections, data from simulations and sensors, model calculations and social media with comments and likes – all this information constitutes big data which aims to provide insights for the future, or predictions.

Companies have realised that the vast quantities of data that are generated in their day-to-day business can be used to continually improve future business performance. With intelligent, prompt analysis, many decisions can already be automated. For example, the branch manager of a chain store used to organise repeat orders while now it is the ERP system that decides what products get delivered to a branch.

In addition to modern database systems that are already optimised for big data, open-source tools such as Hadoop are also available for real-time analysis. The finance sector can now detect attempted fraud automatically by identifying typical patterns from millions of credit card transactions. Social media channels can also yield important information on user opinions by deploying intelligent mining that trawls through millions of posts to determine customer sentiment on specific topics.

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Growth of the Internet: Still far from over

According to the 10th Cisco Visual Networking Index (VNI), there are two developments having an impact on the explosive growth of the Internet.

1. More and more users have access to the Internet. In 2014, 2.8 billion people had Internet access, which equates to 39% of the world population. By 2019, this figure is expected to rise to 3.9 billion, just over half of the world population.

2. The number of devices and connections is on the up. While there were 14 billion devices in 2014, this figure is anticipated to reach 24 billion within the next four years, including an increasing number of tablets and smartphones as well as M2M connections and wearables.

Data centres: Most power outages happen in the summer

In 2014, 711 power outages totalling 61,259 minutes were recorded in the data centres of Germany, Austria and Switzerland. These figures have been compiled from intelligence agency reports, print media, and Web pages by Eaton.

Eaton also records the causes and the duration of the blackouts. IT managers and data centre operators may be interested to know that the average loss of power lasted for 135 minutes and occurred mainly in southern and western Germany. In Austria, it was the western region of the country in particular that was affected. Most power outages across Germany, Austria and Switzerland occurred during the summer months and in most cases, the causes were material or human error.

Development: Java is the most popular server programming language

The annual Stack Overflow survey has found that 54.4% of programmers choose JavaScript as their preferred programming language, closely followed by SQL with 48.0% of the vote. Java, the first server-side language ranks third at 37.4%.

C#, PHP, Python, C++, C, Node.js and AngularJS are next in the rankings of the annual Stack Overflow survey. Stack Overflow is a help page for programmers on which they post questions that other programmers can answer. Each year, the website's operators conduct a survey of their users and inquire about origin, professional profile, income, systems used, etc. This year, 26,086 people from

across 157 countries responded to a total of 45 questions.

A clear majority of developers prefer Windows for programming. 33.8% said they worked with Windows 7, with another 16.5% having already upgraded to Windows 8. XP and Vista, in contrast, are gradually disappearing from the statistics, with rates of only 1.0 and 0.2% respectively. 21.5% prefer Mac OS X and 20.5% use Linux – a relatively high figure considering a market share of just 1.5% for the open operating system. When it comes to Linux distributions, Ubuntu leads with 12.0%, ahead of Debian with 2.2% and Mint with 1.6%.

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