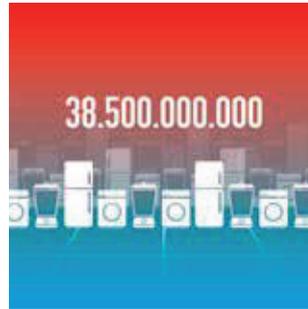# ONE

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M2M - Will the Internet of Things leave humanity behind?

The Internet of Things could cover almost 38.5 billion networked end-points in 2020, an increase of 285% compared with the 2015 figure of 13.4 billion.

Big Data: Hadoop is Business Intelligence for the Future

Big Data remains high on the agenda for IT decision-makers. In a recent study by Barc Research, over three quarters of companies surveyed stated they are either planning big data projects or already rolling them out.

One of the technology solutions underpinning these projects is Apache Hadoop. The Java framework can be leveraged to manage and assess incredible volumes of text, image and video data in both structured and unstructured form in a cost effective fashion. Typical business applications would include system monitoring, customer service, text analysis or forecasting. Companies are already actively setting up their IT infrastructure for future Hadoop projects. Such projects will involve a Barc user survey and will rely on existing IT tools including many established business intelligence tools. In addition to hardware,

Business Analytics:
Direct Data Access to Kick Start Sales

Constant real-time data analysis is a must for effective sales performance monitoring. Two vital components to making this happen are data quality and the integration of business applications.

planned investments will include further training for IT employees (61%), establishing new specialist roles (34%) and increasing budgets to fund future resources.

The Barc research study cites many business applications for big data technologies, led by data research (24%) as well as aggregation and the processing of heterogeneous data sets (20%). Extending existing data warehouses has also been put forward as a relevant Hadoop concept. The companies concerned are also well aware of the challenges they face. The most frequently cited barriers were a lack of technical knowledge and inconclusive application scenarios.

More than two thirds of respondents to the research stated that investment in Hadoop projects would be contingent on having a rock-solid business case and dependable amortisation. Concerns over new technical approaches were voiced by 43% of companies questioned. Another challenge highlighted was that many companies have yet to state explicitly the key business challenges and opportunities which might be addressed by Big Data solutions.

Direct access to data, the daily use of analytical tools and assessment of data within the company boardroom are the critical factors underpinning sales success and increased turnover. 97% of companies that attained or even exceeded their previous sales goals revealed to the British consultancy Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) that they had provided both employees and company managers with direct real-time access to customer and/or account data. Around 60% of these companies also added that they studied sales reports at least once a day.

When it came to assessing the analytical tools used for sales data, companies cited the accuracy of the data and the scope for easy integration into other systems as particularly important. Conversely, more than 30% of companies in the survey saw these exact areas as the two biggest weak points in the range of tools they currently use.

According to the EIU survey, another key component to success was that executive management also reviews the same analyses. This applied to a third of the companies surveyed, for which in-house figures showed that they had excelled in reaching self-imposed targets. When only sales managers processed the figures, this rate of success declined to 19%.

Mobile apps: Developers lag behind developments

Limited resources, a lack of processes and ever-changing technologies and practices are delaying the development of mobile apps. Although interest from both users and companies in mobile apps continues to grow, development is lagging behind demand. This was the finding of the 2015 State of Mobility Global Developer Survey conducted by Telerik, which is part of the Progress Group.

The companies surveyed cite more operational efficiency as the most important reason for the development of mobile apps. Other reasons highlighted include new sales opportunities (39%), increased productivity (38%), better customer service (35%) and greater involvement of customers (34%).

For 57% of the developers surveyed, mobile development is still uncharted territory or they have never created a mobile app yet. In addition, 47% of the developers surveyed said that they only develop a single mobile app on average per year.

Oracle Identity Management: Increased security for mobile devices

Oracle has now integrated a Mobility Management system into its Identity Management solution. In this new version, called Oracle Identity Management 11gR2 Patchset 3, companies can also protect users outside the company network via a standardised user interface.

The software provides functions such as Mobile Device Management, Mobile App Management, Mobile Content Management and Mobile Identity Management – this platform can leverage both single sign-on and context-related user authentication. In addition, new Identity Governance features make it easier to adhere to compliance guidelines such as functional segregation and Role Lifecycle Management. The developers have also improved the user interface so that it can now be used more intuitively.

E-Commerce: Business is going digital

According to IT consulting company IDC's current study 'Digitally Transforming Retail Businesses', western European businesses are currently experiencing an enormous investment wave in digital infrastructure. Nearly two thirds of businesses questioned have already taken on a massive expansion of their data-driven business models or are just about to do so.

The focus for investment plans in 2015 and the following years is the centralisation of all databases into an integrated overview incorporating all customer data and product databases. Extending mobile access will be another key investment area.

Keeping pace with the multitude of access points customers can select is a particular challenge for businesses. Existing platforms for e-commerce will soon be equipped with new features to meet these challenges, which in turn will generate further increases in mobile commerce.

Big Data: Real-Time Analyses Working with Live Data

The opportunities Big Data analyses open up for business are vast. This potential for gaining competitive advantage does depend on the ability to immediately compile data from a range of sources. Oracle has specific tools that can meet this requirement.

One of the central benefits of Big Data is the ability to store large heterogeneous volumes of data in their original formats. An added advantage is rendering the data usable with immediate effect and eliminating the need for any data conversion process.

Conversely, using this same data for reports or dashboards actually becomes far more difficult. Oracle has a strong track record for supporting and promoting the development of Big Data analytics. Newly released software solutions include Oracle GoldenGate for Big Data as well as Oracle Big Data Discovery.

Oracle GoldenGate for Big Data transmits a stream of transactional data to analytical tools including Apache Flume, Hive and HBase as well as Apache Hadoop. The software ensures that the flow of data to systems continues non-stop, keeping them up to date at all times. In addition, Oracle Big Data Discovery paves the way for users to find, examine, transform and analyse data in Hadoop.

As a complementary solution, Oracle also offers the Big Data Integrator. This software is used to move and convert large and heterogeneous volumes of data. The application implements an ETL (Extract, Transform and Load) approach and often eliminates the need to deploy costly middleware systems. Together with Oracle GoldenGate for Big Data, the Big Data Integrator accelerates the processes for transmitting, transforming and synchronising even the largest volumes of unsorted data, which can then be made available for real-time analysis.

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Cloud computing:
Belgian SMEs lead adoption of cloud services

Belgium leads the way in the use of business software in the cloud. Of the Belgian companies surveyed, 53% indicated that they use one or more cloud solutions. The United States comes second with 51%, closely followed by the United Kingdom with 47%. In Germany, however, this figure was 31%.Germany comes in last place internationally. This was the finding of the Small Business Cloud Barometer 2015 study conducted by the Dutch market research institute Pb7 on behalf of the German software company Exact.

A total of 3,000 small and medium enterprises (SMEs) with fewer than 50 employees in Belgium, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and the United States have been surveyed. The survey is based on details about manufacturers and wholesale distributors as well as information from company accountants and is available to download for free.

Databases: Oracle Database 12*c* moves to the cloud

While Oracle Database 11g already features a cloud service, it is Oracle Database 12c that transforms the Oracle Database into a fully-fledged cloud solution.

One of the key pillars of the Oracle cloud strategy is ensuring that all cloud services provided are identical to those used by customers on-premise. This simplifies the data exchange process and makes it easier for companies to set up a hybrid cloud which combines private and public clouds.

Oracle Database 12*c* also offers a Multitenant Option which is available with the Enterprise Edition. Oracle Multitenant enables multiple Pluggable Databases (PDB) within a single Container Database (CDB). Sharing processes, RAM and the data dictionary helps streamline database operations even further. Another benefit of cloud deployment is the scope to activate and deactivate Pluggable databases within the Container Database almost at the touch of a button.

This makes consolidating databases much easier, and also makes them far more convenient to manage. For example, in a hybrid cloud model, the administrator can shift the Pluggable Database between the local Container database and the container in the public cloud, depending on current resource capacity and departmental requirements. The IT department can also exploit this process to deliver databases extremely quickly.

Cloud Services: Outsourced services remain in demand

Outsourcing IT services is still on the wish list for many companies. This trend emerged from a recent IDC study published by Cisco. The companies outsourcing IT not only aim for efficiency and cost reduction, but see external service providers as a platform for promoting innovation, growth and digital transformation.

Due to the expected higher level of security, performance, control and data privacy, IT managers plan to deploy mainly private and hybrid clouds within their IT outsourcing models. Worldwide, companies treat their data storage and processing on a quite different scale. Out front are the United States, where 34% of all companies implement a cloud strategy at a high level, followed by Latin America at 29%, and the UK at 27%.

Companies also expect improvements in additional revenue (47%), and optimised compliance with service level agreements (SLAs) (26%) from their IT-outsourcing investment.

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Customer experience: The big picture is important to customers

Many companies tend to look at things from their own internal perspective when developing new products or organising their service models. Of course, the customer's viewpoint is critical to success – and the customer's perspective is often very different from that of the company.

Using a method known as Customer Journey Mapping, companies can analyse the gap between these different perceptions in order to arrive at accurate conclusions and take appropriate actions. This method is based on the observation that a customer, in most cases, is in successive contact with several representatives, interfaces and departments within a company, including sales, website, online store, hotline and the service department. Making this "journey" through the company as comfortable as possible for the customer is an important way to improve customer loyalty and customer relationships.

In Customer Journey Mapping, the customer's path from one interaction to the next is documented and analysed jointly by employees from the various departments. This is often done in graphical form using a diagram on which the individual stages of the journey through the company are mapped and the degree of customer satisfaction is recorded. The next step is to lessen the gap between the customer's perspective and that of the company at each individual stage and at each individual customer touchpoint. The ultimate aim for the customer is to experience the entire chain of contact in a positive light.

Oracle holds regular workshops on the Analysis of Customer Experience and on Customer Journey Mapping. One event introduces the topic and its general meaning. At a second event, Oracle performs an analysis of all the customer's contacts directly with the customer. For more information, visit blogs.oracle.com.

Disaster Recovery: Fixing Enterprise Data Storage is No Easy Task

No matter how thoroughly we cover all the bases, when it comes to data security we can often be proven wrong.

In the past, many IT teams learned the hard way that even reliable RAID6 arrays were not completely impervious to breakdown. When deploying two or more hard disks, , the task of system rebuilding frequently fails. Despite the ability to exchange the disks, each RAID controller uses unique algorithms to establish a RAID6. The complex RAID mapping used to distribute the data over multiple hard disks, involves a costly reverse-engineering process to replicate the proprietary system data structure. The process of encryption can also present a virtually insurmountable obstacle to rebuilding attempts given that there are currently around two dozen encryption methods. Kroll Ontrack advises IT decision-makers to opt for software encryption as this approach results in far fewer problems when rebuilding as opposed to using hardware encryption.
It is also imperative to ensure the right key to the data is stored safely in the event of any data loss.

SaaS, PaaS, IaaS: The cloud market records significant growth

According to the market research institute IDC, the cloud market could see an average annual growth rate of 19% in the coming years and revenues could grow to $200 billion by 2018. IDC combines SaaS, PaaS, IaaS, hardware, software and other services under the generic term "cloud".

Global IT expenditure is set to rise to a level of USD 3.8 trillion in 2015. Analysts estimate that this level of investment is unlikely to change significantly in the years to come. They only see growth rates of 13% on average in expenditure for the "third platform", which by definition comprises cloud, mobile, big data and social. According to IDC, trade partners of IT companies will play a particularly important role in the digital transformation of companies as they are perceived by customers as "trusted advisors".

A free download of the study carried out on behalf of Microsoft is available online in PDF format.

Employer branding: Employee evaluations influence applicants

A recent representative survey conducted by Bitkom Research among 803 professionals found that the evaluation of a company on the Web can play a decisive role in influencing who applies to that company for open positions. Nearly three out of ten applicants (29%) search online to find out how past and present employees have evaluated the company. More than three quarters (76%) of those who change jobs state that employee evaluations do have an effect on their personal decision-making.

Slightly over a half of those surveyed (53%) decided in favour of a company after being encouraged by online reports and comments about that company.

Cloud Computing: Infrastructure as a service is adoption is growing

The European cloud services market for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is set to grow about 17% per year over the next three years, from its current base of €18.9billion to €30.1 billion. According to the 2015 Europe SMB Cloud Insights Report, the strongest increase is expected to come from Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS), which is predicted to grow from €7.6 billion to €11.6 billion. The report forecasts that :

- 38% will implement an IaaS solution by 2018.
- 25% implement a SaaS option.
- 21% access hosted unified communications.
- 16% rely on webhosting services.

Contemporary work: Video is changing the office workplace

Modern technologies such as video conferencing – whether mobile, desktop or in conference rooms – are a key driver of more efficient cooperation in the office according to a study conducted by Sir Cary Cooper, Professor of Organisational Psychology and Health at the Manchester Business School.

The study found that for 92% of younger employees that had grown up using IT applications, it's not only their working hours, but where and how they work that matters most. With the help of video connections, staff can collaborate with colleagues on projects anywhere and at any time. This makes it easier to balance professional roles with private life, especially when caring for children or dependents. According to a study by Virgin Media business, 60% of office workers in the UK will be working regularly from home by 2022. These employees expect the freedom to choose how and with what equipment and technologies they will work. Working with either one's own or familiar devices is high on the priority list. Many companies are already meeting this desire for greater autonomy as 54% of businesses around the world now support employees working with their own devices.

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