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Cloud Computing Improves Productivity in IBM Benchmark and Learning Centers

Overview

IBM Benchmark and Learning Center

Challenge
- The time and personnel required to provision resources for benchmark platforms and course IT infrastructures were quite high, often requiring more than a week of work per benchmark or course lab environment.

Solution
- Cloud computing enabled IBM to federate IT resources across its Benchmark Center in Montpellier, France, creating a virtual Benchmark Center which automated and optimized resource provisioning.

- The IBM Systems and Technology Group European Learning Center in Montpellier could, thanks to Cloud computing, consolidate their IT resources into a single location and reduce lab system provisioning time.

Key Benefits
- The technical staff can now configure IT resources for a benchmark or a course lab environment in just one day.

- IT resource utilization has dramatically improved, the number of benchmarks delivered has increased, the cost for setting up each course lab environment has been reduced, customer satisfaction has improved and IT and personnel resources have remained constant.

IBM Benchmark and Learning Centers offer a real-world glimpse of cloud computing's benefits.

The technical support demands of the Benchmark and European Learning Center in Montpellier, France are high. Before the adoption of cloud computing, provisioning the IT infrastructure for a benchmark or course required more than a week of intensive labor. This limited the centers' ability to respond quickly to benchmark and course requests and increased costs, effectively ruling out some benchmarks and courses.

IBM applied to create a virtual world-wide Benchmark Center in Montpellier, thereby linking widely dispersed IT resources and reserving and provisioning them, on-demand, with the required operating systems, middleware, applications, server capacity, network and storage requirements.

End-users can now access a web portal to self-reserve and configure the required benchmark platform in just a few clicks via the dynamic infrastructure enabled by the cloud. The cloud identifies the most appropriate resources and provisions them just in time.

The same approach was used to consolidate the IT resources used for remote lab delivery of the European Learning Centers into one location, allowing for easy course reservation and IT resource provisioning. Configuring IT resources, which used to take technical staff weeks to complete, now takes one day, thanks to cloud computing's efficient scaling and provisioning.

Cloud computing has enabled IBM to shorten the sales cycle by quickly conducting benchmark tests and has dramatically improved IT resource usage. In three years, cloud computing has enabled the IBM Montpellier Benchmark Center to increase the number of benchmarks delivered per year by more than 60 percent, due to reduced setup costs and rapid provisioning.

Cloud computing also reduced course lab environment setup cost by consolidating lab systems and reducing the number of skilled personnel required to manage and operate these environments.

This dramatic improvement in the economics at the center and the rapid deployment of services, coupled with tight alignment with business goals, offers a clear example of cloud computing's key role in IBM's new paradigm for dynamic IT infrastructure. By addressing increasing service expectations, rising cost pressures and newly emerging risks, cloud computing delivers true business transformation.

Cloud computing allows you to accomplish more in less time, with the same resources, while improving delivered service quality and customer satisfaction.

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