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Considerations for building a data center 25 Thursday, April, 2013



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FOCUS 29 – THE BIG DATA ISSUE. READ IT ONLINE NOW!

Published on 7th May 2013 by Penny Jones



Just one look at the cover is enough to tell you that our latest edition of FOCUS – Issue 29 - is all about big data. But what is big data and why is it of such interest? I visited CERN to find out (See Pages 22-26 of the digital edition, available for reading now if you follow this link).



Head of CERN's openlab project Bob Jones told me big data goes much further than thinking about scale. "Because for different organizations 'big' can mean different things," Jones says. For CERN big data is really its raison d'être. "Up until now we have been looking at how we can satisfy our needs for the next couple of years but what we are seeing now is not only the need for raw science data but all the derivatives that come out of that."

Jones likens CERN to a big industrial plant, which is quite fitting for GE's purpose. GE pushes big data solutions focussed on the Industrial Internet (see Pages 30-33). Another vendor representative I spoke with, LucidWork's CTO Grant Ingersoll, told me machines and the Internet – funnily enough – are the reason we have big data in the first place.

"[Big data] is this unique combination of man and machine that work together on data that brings new business insights and solves complex problems that, until now, have not been tackled. In many ways, business intelligence (BI), big data and analysis tools are closely related. What is missing in a lot of the existing tools is the ability to discover connections between data that can be found only by flexibly searching and discovering relationships. They also often miss the human element in that they are unable to reflect the (collective) intelligence gained by the way people interact with the underlying data, as well as the results of the analysis itself," Ingersoll says.

Analytics platform company ParAccell's VP of solutions and product marketing John Santaferraro also puts the industrialized spin on his definition: "The term big data is used to address a recent uptick in the development of new kinds of data coming from the internet of things, an explosion of mobile devices and applications and the proliferation of machines, monitors and sensors producing massive streams of data."

The challenge moving forward, according to Dell Software product marketing manager Joanna Schloss, will be merging the areas of BI and big data analytics. "If you're looking at it from a BI standpoint, there's a need to expand existing architectures. BI is a mature market but just because something is mature doesn't mean it's complete and right now the BI market is not moving as fast as data is evolving," she says.

IDC says less than 1% of data is currently analyzed and Ovum analyst Laurent Lachal refers to big data as the "cloud computing oil" of 2013, so the obvious assumption is that big data is a market just waiting to be tapped.

So it comes as no surprise that most other articles covered in this edition – from Microsoft's cloud-scale data centers (Pages 15-19) to Facebook's cold storage



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Blogger



Penny Jones

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(Page 64) – all have a big element. Even the US Federal Consolidation project can be linked back to the modern day demands placed on the IT space due to rising amounts of data, along with Iceland's pitch for data center business (Pages 38 to 40). In Iceland's case, it hopes big data will lead companies to look for cheaper options for data center energy – but is the market yet ready to bite?

It is quite easy to tie everything to the big data space in this industry in which we work, in some way or another. Big data, I would argue (or the preparations being taken for it) is one of the reasons why we are working in a thriving industry – and forecasts show this trend is unlikely to change.

Also in this edition, we have our regular data center infrastructure management (DCIM) coverage (Pages 55-61), focussing on user cases including Microsoft, and our special FOCUS on Cooling (Pages 43-53), where we uncover results from tests on server leakage and look at liquid cooling, and how CERN is putting the technology to the test.

We also take a look at the conundrum behind converged infrastructure, the benefits large multinationals see in outsourcing and the death of the server – as we know it.

We hope you enjoy this edition. Next edition we will be taking you to the US West Coast, delving into industry developments around the intelligent data center. Getting your head around big data is a good lead in for how such developments will change the way we work as an industry moving forward.

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