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Rackspace Cloud to Power Particle-Smashing Physics at CERN



By Peter Suci
E-Commerce Times
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Through a brand-new yearlong agreement, the Rackspace Private Cloud platform will now be deployed onto servers that CERN uses for production physics experiments. "The easier CERN can tap into multiple cloud resource pools without significant retooling, the more data they can process and the faster they can prove theories," said Chris Jackson, Rackspace manager for big cloud solutions.

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Open cloud provider Rackspace has entered into a yearlong contributor agreement with CERN openlab whereby it will deliver a hybrid cloud solution based on OpenStack to help CERN research the origins of the universe, the company announced on Monday.

CERN openlab provides a framework for testing and validating information technologies and services in partnership with industry at CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research. The new technology partnership will include joint initiatives focused on creating a reference architecture and operational model for federated cloud services between the Rackspace Private Cloud, Rackspace Public Cloud and CERN's OpenStack-powered clouds.

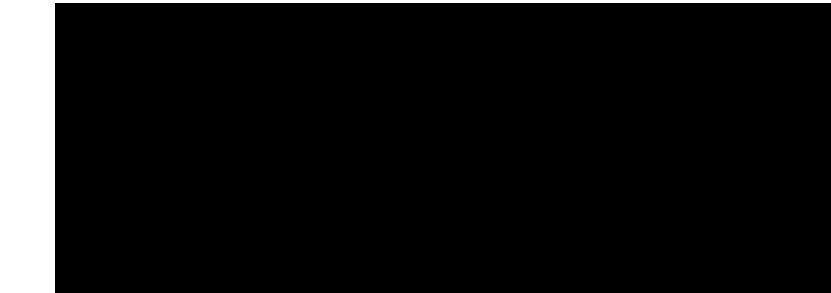
"We definitely see great value in open source technologies like OpenStack," said Tim Bell, infrastructure manager in the IT department at CERN. "They foster continuous technological improvements through community contributions while also giving us the ability to quickly address challenges, such as massive scaling, by leveraging the work of others."

More Than 25 Petabytes Annually

CERN uses some of the largest and most powerful particle accelerators in the world, including its famous Large Hadron Collider, creating an enormous volume of data -- more than 25 petabytes of data annually, in fact.

Rackspace has already delivered a solution that would allow CERN to burst workloads into its public cloud. Through the new collaborative agreement, however, the Rackspace Private Cloud platform will now be deployed onto servers that CERN uses for production physics experiments.

Rackspace and CERN openlab will test and ensure the seamless federation between private and public cloud platforms to accommodate excess workload.



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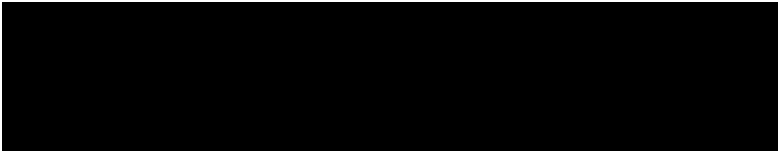


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"We expect to get access to one of the largest and most resource-intensive cloud workloads in the world to work on methods to make CERN's consumption more seamless across multiple cloud platforms by addressing the technical and governance challenges of cloud federation," Chris Jackson, [Rackspace's](#) manager for big cloud solutions, told the E-Commerce Times.

"The easier CERN can tap into multiple cloud resource pools without significant retooling, the more data they can process and the faster they can prove theories," Jackson added. "From a Rackspace perspective, stress testing both our cloud services and our federation plans against CERN is a great benchmark."

'Own the Base, Rent the Spike'

The hybrid solution -- involving both public and private clouds -- can also accommodate short-term increases in data volumes.

"Even CERN has spikes in their workload, typically around conferences where results are due to be released," Jackson explained. "The power of the hybrid cloud is based around 'own the base, rent the spike' -- the ability to go beyond your normal infrastructure limitations to meet a particular workload without making long-term persistent investments is powerful.

"Couple this with greater choice and flexibility over data sovereignty, performance and budget preference, and the power of hybrid is attractive to most customers as their usage and desire for cloud enabled applications increases," he added.



'Pretty Breathtaking'

While solving the mysteries of the universe may mean looking to the heavens, CERN is already accustomed to the cloud.

"CERN has experimented with distributed computing ever since its SETI@home initiative," Josh Crandall, principal analyst at [Netpop Research](#), told the E-Commerce Times.

"Rackspace can leverage the history and benefit from the collaboration, but the company will have to dedicate hardware and people power to CERN in return."

The project could be extremely significant for Rackspace, meanwhile.

"The aim of this pilot project is to extend CERN's private/internal cloud to Rackspace' public cloud, allowing the lab to leverage the company's infrastructure for additional compute/storage capacity," said Charles King, principal analyst at [Pund-IT](#).

"Practically speaking, that makes the deal similar to other commercial 'computing on demand' offerings, though the size of the infrastructure CERN will eventually use -- estimated at up to 15,000 Rackspace servers -- is pretty breathtaking."

Very Big Data

How well Rackspace can keep pace with CERN's high-level demands, of course, remains to be seen.

"How much overhead can Rackspace absorb and stay competitive in cloud computing when competitors like Amazon and Google are evolving with commercial accounts?" Crandall mused. "The partnership will resonate with the core Rackspace community, but I question how much sway it will have with CIOs and CTOs, who are focused on reliability and return."

Still, it could serve to show that hybrid solutions can be affordable.

"Outsourcing management to providers like Rackspace should naturally give a more competitive TCO, regardless of technology used," said Jackson. "The industry is trending towards heavy cloud consumption that is currently being held back by the lack of flexibility in pure public cloud models when presented with large enterprise workloads.

"All businesses will have elements of their operations which are best suited to on-demand or always-on cloud options," added Jackson. "Finding this blend and harnessing it will result in a compelling commercial model which will certainly drive the industry towards hybrid." **EET**

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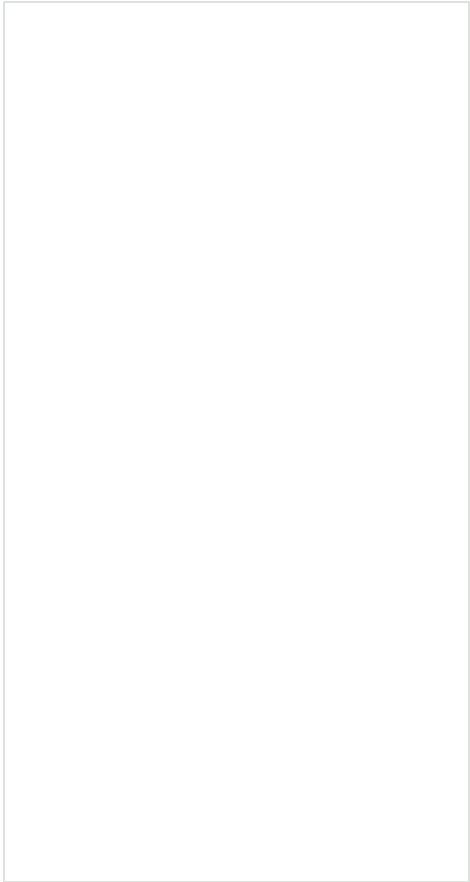
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Better watch the skies for flying pigs, because it looks like Oracle just teamed up not just with Microsoft but also with Salesforce.com. "The Oracle database has always been the foundation for Salesforce.com," noted Nucleus Research analyst Hyoun Park. "For all the verbal jousting and dueling these two companies have done, there has always been a strong tech partnership or affinity between them."

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Entertainment business, will soon take over as CEO for Zynga, the social game developer best known for *FarmVille*. "Zynga obviously had to pull a rabbit like Matrick out of its hat for wary investors unhappy with the publisher's fall from dominance on Facebook," said video game analyst George Chronis.

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One. Just recently, we've got Ouya as well. The latest additions to the video game console arena? Google and possibly even Apple, according to reports. Bottom line? "From a hardware standpoint it is going to be messy," predicted Brett Sappington, director of research at Parks Associates.



it will soon be launching in Chicago. "They have been on a fairly firm footing for a while," said nScreenMedia's Colin Dixon. "The broadcasters tried to get them down twice while the lawsuit was pending, and that's been refused twice by the courts. They are in a fairly stable position."



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