



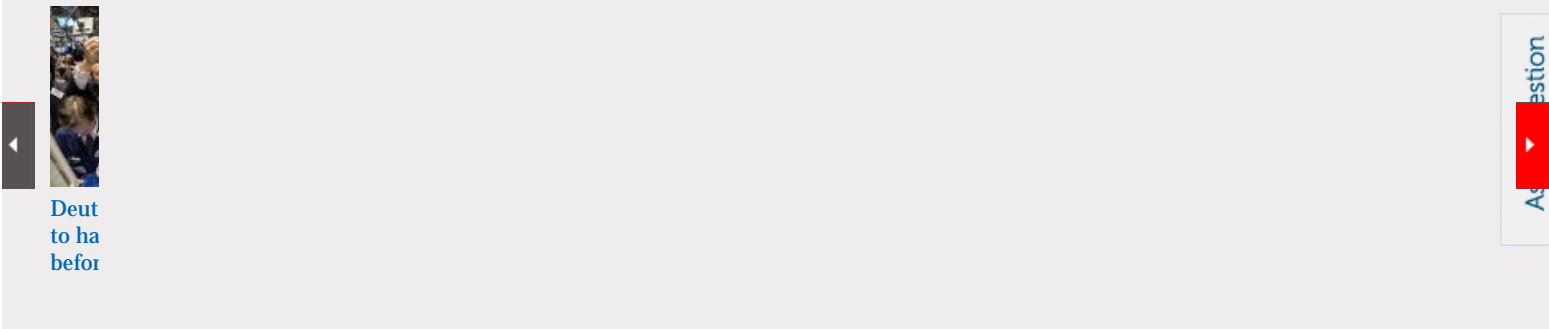
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Rackspace hopes to experiment with continuous deployment in private environment with CERN

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Rackspace's new arrangement with CERN isn't remarkable in terms of size – Rackspace

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has customers that bring in far more revenue. But it is notable for a couple of other reasons.

One is that it highlights an interesting reversal in the market. There was a time when huge research institutions like CERN ran the biggest computing operations. If one was to learn from the other, it was the commercial sector that could have picked up a tip or two from the researchers.

With cloud computing, that's changed. "It used to be that we were the leading edge in computing in terms of scalability," said Tim Bell, infrastructure manager in the IT department at CERN. "But now the public clouds are way past CERN's scale."

CERN started looking into OpenStack, and later Rackspace, when it determined it would need to expand its computing capacity to support its plans to double the energy of the Large Hadron Collider in 2015, Bell said. The Large Hadron Collider is the particle accelerator used in the recent discovery of the Higgs Boson.

OpenStack's vibrant community and strong commercial participation appealed to CERN, he said.

CERN uses OpenStack in two of its data centers, each with 1,300 servers. It has also used public clouds for the simulation work it does. It will begin using Rackspace's Private Cloud technology internally and will work with Rackspace to develop new technologies for linking those private clouds with Rackspace's public cloud.

But it's not a one way street. Rackspace gains too and hopes to test out one particularly interesting advancement. "One key thing we know we can do in the public cloud and we want to prove out in private is running in a continuous deployment scenario," said John Engates, Rackspace CTO.

In its public cloud, rather than upgrade to new versions of OpenStack with each major release, Rackspace is constantly upgrading, essentially every day, he said. "That's something we want to prove out in the public cloud context as well. Upgrades are never easy or fun," he said.

Businesses would surely like an easy way to similarly continuously update rather than go through the headache of major upgrades. Rackspace hopes to be able to work on functions like continuous deployment in a private cloud as part of its collaboration with CERN.

Rackspace also gets experience through this deal with working with a research institution, offering it the potential to win other similar customers. "CERN is not a typical customer," Engates said. Most Rackspace customers are ecommerce or Web companies, or those running business-centric applications. "We feel we are lucky to be working with someone who has such different requirements. It will challenge us to build the best cloud for a wide variety of use cases," he said.

CERN isn't the only particle physics research institution turning to the cloud. Others have worked on [linking clouds](#) operated by institutions around the world so that researchers can share their computing resources.

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