

EDITORIAL

Cloud computing is an advancement of IT and it is often pronounced as third revolution after PC and Internet. It is the conglomeration of distributed computing, parallel computing, grid computing and distributed databases. Cloud computing is considered as 'a style of computing in which massive, scalable and elastic IT based capabilities are delivered as a service to external customers using internet technology'. Cloud computing allows content creation to be made when data and software applications reside on and drawn from the network rather than locally on any one work station. The users can create and save their files online, share content, work collaboratively with others or create entire services that can be accessed online without need of any program on their own computer. The following features are commonly associated with clouds and cloud computing :-

Resource outsourcing

Utility computing

Large numbers of machines

Automated resource management

Virtualization

Parallel computing

The cloud computing services can be classified into three categories: (1) Software as a Service (SaaS) - In this type of computing, a user upon registration is allowed to use software accessible through net. The related data and work may be stored on client machines or with service providers. It may be free or available on rental basis or on per use basis. (2) Platform as a service (PaaS)-Under this computing platform such as operating system is provided to customer on a monthly rental basis. (3) Infrastructure as a service (IaaS)- a user may avail hardware services such as processors, memory, network etc on agreement basis for specific period of time and price.

Two of the most useful free “cloud computing” applications are the Google Apps for Education which is a free online suite of tools that includes Gmail for e-mail and Google Docs for documents, spreadsheets, and presentations, and Microsoft's cloud service (Live@edu) including the SkyDrive. Using the cloud approach, everybody can work on the same document at the same time to make corrections as well as improve it dynamically in a collaborative manner.

The cloud computing offers many interesting services for libraries that may help to reduce the cost and increase the capacity, reliability and performance. It has a large potential for libraries to harvest upon. Now the modern libraries have OPAC and interlibrary loan service, but the users cannot access the shared resources through uniform platform. By adopting cloud computing technology, the integrated library resources can support distributed uniform access interface. Further in view of increasing importance of e-journals, and e-databases, there is a big challenge to libraries for providing access. Through the cloud computing technology, libraries can establish a shared public cloud as it has infinite storage capacity and computing power. Moreover, users can visit the shared e-resources through any access terminal. Thus the cloud computing technology is cost saving technology offering more flexibility and innovation. Further it offers user centric service oriented solution to libraries.

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