Web Content Management in the Cloud

How the combination of Open Source and the Cloud creates opportunities for performance, cost efficiency and marketing innovation

The Cloud as a place - along with its software delivery model brother SaaS (Software as a Service) has become an undeniably growing force in the enterprise. Businesses of all sizes are increasingly adopting different parts of the “stack” and utilizing either traditionally architected software delivered from cloud based environments or subscribing to software-as-a-service products that are, themselves, delivered from cloud environments.

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And the market is moving fast. Consider that in July of 2010, in predicting that the market would reach $8.5 billion within the year, Gartner Research Director Sharon Mertz said “after a decade of use, adoption of SaaS continues to grow and evolve within the enterprise application markets. As tighter capital budgets demand leaner alternatives, familiarity with the model increases, and interest in platforms as a service and cloud computing grows”.

A mere two years later – Gartner has revised its estimate for the market for applications delivered from the cloud to $14 billion this year – and $22.1 billion by 2015. But along with that growth, the realities have begun to sink in as global enterprises start to deal with different requirements across international borders. As Paolo Malinverno, vice president at Gartner said in May of 2012 - “The opportunities for cloud computing value are valid all over the world, and the same is true for some of the risks and costs. However, some of cloud computing’s potential risks and costs – namely security, transparency and integration – which are generally applicable worldwide, take on a different meaning in Europe.”

So, as the need for agility and technological prowess in the enterprise grows, businesses have started to realize – that even though the costs may be the same from a deployment standpoint - cloud alone isn’t quite enough. While the cloud provides an increase in overall effectiveness and speed, we still require enterprise security, scalability, transparency and integration.

In short – cloud and cloud related delivery of applications is growing – and should continue to grow. But it’s not the only answer. Scalability, security and transparency is familiar ground for enterprise, commercial open source products. And, with Open Source it’s not the cost of licensing that provides the true differentiation. Rather, an Open Source solution provides a number of other benefits to the enterprise.

As Jeroen Verberg, CEO of Hippo said in the Hippo Whitepaper Benefits Of Commercial Open Source For The Enterprise:

“the big benefit of open-source software is not the reduced license costs per se, but the flexibility it brings. Connectivity with existing infrastructure and platforms is easier to achieve and the liberty to adapt the software to the demands from business users is a inherent feature. The Commercial Open-source model gives you the best of both worlds: the quality of service and security of professional support and the flexibility and freedom of open-source.”

This provides even a stronger case for Open Source combined with Cloud delivered infrastructures. Both models enhance each other in terms of delivering flexibility, speed to market – and portability. This gives the enterprise much more control over their deployments.

Therefore, as Jeroen concludes in his whitepaper:

“By empowering enterprises and putting them back in the driver’s seat they can drive down costs and be more competitive at the same time.”

Most enterprise IT organizations are becoming familiar with the SaaS and Cloud based offerings across a number of applications – including Web Content Management. Similarly, these same CIO’s and IT Vice Presidents are familiar with Open Source and the benefits it brings.

This whitepaper is meant to describe the business benefits of Open Source Web Content Management delivered from a Cloud Infrastructure, and how technology groups can use the idea of Flexibility, Portability and Speed as ways to create much more agile web content management and delivery platforms.
It enables the Enterprise
to do more

Many Web content management systems have matured and developed the ability to publish to multiple channels. Terms like Web Engagement Management, and Customer Experience Management are popular among both content marketing practitioners and CMS vendors. In fact, the latest Forrester Wave Report for Web Content Management is focused exclusively on vendors providing “Online Customer Experience” using content.

Report author Stephen Powers states:
“Functionality to enable publishing to the Web — whether internally or externally — has become commoditized. Yet, now, the WCM market is growing based on customer experience management.”

WCM software solutions are increasingly differentiating themselves on a scale of how well their solution can help a customer DELIVER a personalized “web experience” to the client’s consumers through multiple channels such as web, mobile and social.

But one of the challenges is that as WCMS systems have evolved – the method of delivering those multiple channels hasn’t. It’s still a cumbersome project for marketing departments to tune their existing WCMS or E-Commerce Catalog system to add mobile, tablet or social channels. Then, combine that with the need of marketers to deliver targeted content across these channels – and the project becomes even more complicated.

This is where Cloud and Open Source working together provides some interesting advantages. The Open Source model (in combination with open standards) creates an opportunity for the enterprise to create a centralized repository that can pull in content from myriad sources. This content might be from other Web Content Management Systems, or Ecommerce Catalog applications or even back-office applications. The key is that once it’s pulled into the centralized content repository, then the content is highly normalized (medium neutral content storage) and can be scaled accordingly.

Further, if it is placed into a system (Like Hippo CMS) that content can then be displayed in targeted and contextually relevant ways across the multiple channels that need to be developed. This means that despite the capabilities of the existing WCMS or Ecommerce application – the content can be targeted based on location, device, time, behavior or even other third-party data insights that can be used to generated contextual content. This provides the power and flexibility to marketing to develop powerful new content channels.

Then – because it’s cloud-based, that means that the enterprise doesn’t have to extend and build new infrastructure in order to accomplish the new initiative. The cloud infrastructure means that the architecture and ability to scale to a level appropriate for the business is already there. This provides the enterprise with the ability to “test” these channels, or develop slowly – or to jump right in and immediately scale to their global requirements without having to develop their own data center and support infrastructure. This is an incredibly powerful business case for speed and efficiency and empowers the organization to generate business results even faster.

It enables greater cost-efficiency over time

As was established at the beginning of this paper – cost is not necessarily the main benefit of choosing Open Source web content management over a proprietary system. Many studies have been done and the difference in “licensing costs” and “initial deployment costs” an vary greatly – and one model doesn’t necessarily provide more advantage.
As former 451 Group Analyst Kathleen Reidy said in a CIO Article:

“in the end, when you use an open source content management system, what you purchase isn’t really all that different from a commercial CMS, except there are differences in the licensing and you have access to portions of the code.”

And this is the key. Those same studies – like the one entitled The Siren Song of Open Source CMS from proprietary vendor Sitecore - that find that licensing costs are the smallest part of the expense – also find that servicing the software over time can be among the biggest.

And, contrary to popular believe – these costs are much less with an Open Source solution. And, when you combine in an Open Source WCM solution delivered from a cloud infrastructure – the enterprise maximizes this cost efficiency equation.

This is for a few reasons:

1. **Open Source enjoys wide spread adoption while Cloud empowers access**
   
   Open source infrastructure platforms such as Linux, Java, Apache, Eclipse, Lucene and others have an enormous adoption among developers – meaning that the global talent pool for maintaining these solutions is huge. Add in the remote access that a Cloud Infrastructure provides – which means that these developers don’t need to be local, and the flexibility for enterprises to maintain the solution over the long-term becomes clear.

2. **Open Source & Cloud encourage innovation**
   
   Because of Open Source communities – which foster innovative solution to leading edge challenges – enterprises can take advantage of infrastructures and technologies that are leading edge and provide for a much more nimble and effective deployment of technology. No longer are enterprises at the slow, methodical upgrade cycle of traditional, installed proprietary solutions. They can take advantage of both the speed of innovation in the community – as well as the speed to market and flexibility of the cloud architecture.

3. **Open Source & Cloud have matured**
   
   Perhaps most importantly, both Open Source and Cloud infrastructures have matured. Cloud infrastructures like Hippo offer enterprise features with more than three nines (99.999%) uptime guarantees. As Web and dynamic content become such an important part of the puzzle – enterprises are no longer stuck looking at community projects, and/or basic cloud services for solving complex issues. Enterprise Open Source Cloud WCMS solutions are now available that can meet and exceed Security, Scalability and Dependability requirements.

In summary, the cost-efficiency benefits of Cloud are only expanded when you combine Open source - said in the Benefits of Commercial Open Source. In today’s enterprise environments, software systems need to be integrated and fine-tuned, adapted to meet demands of the business users and hardened to ensure security. Sometimes the extension points (called API’s) provided by commercial vendors suffice, but more often they don’t. The one big challenge with closed-source proprietary solutions is that you are not allowed to change the software. Bottom line: you are not allowed to see how it works or customize it to the unique needs of your business users, validate security or boost performance. Using Open Source provides the enterprise the power to do this – and using a Cloud Infrastructure enables the enterprise to do it quickly and efficiently.
Example

The Dutch Government  Ministry Of Foreign Affairs

A great example of an organization that has leveraged both Open Source and Cloud delivered infrastructures is The Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the Dutch Government. The Ministry coordinates and carries out Dutch foreign policy at its headquarters in The Hague and through its missions abroad. It is likewise the channel through which the Dutch Government communicates with foreign governments and international organizations. The ministry’s web presence is one of its primary communication vehicles and is an incredibly important part of its overall mission. The ministry has recently consolidated and migrated their web content platform onto Hippo CMS in the Cloud.

The challenge
Consolidate Multiple Sites While Improving Performance

The Ministry faced a large challenge. With more than 150 embassy and consulate web-sites each in a variety of five different languages (Dutch, English, German, French and Spanish) – the organization required a solution that would help consolidate these sites under a single web content management solution. Additionally, the Ministry required a solution that would allow them to expand their web content into other languages including Arabic, Russian, Chinese, Korean and Japanese. And finally, because 150 sites would be consolidated, the government organization highly desired a solution that would improve their existing navigational methods – as well as improve their Search Engine Optimization (SEO) efforts.

The solution
A Simpler Cloud Based Infrastructure And Better Performance

Hippo CMS and the advantage of its cloud based Context Aware Server was the key to The Ministry’s success. The Hippo services team worked with The Ministry to accomplish a complete solution for the new web content platform.

• From 150 embassy and consulate web sites – to 1 WCM

The team migrated all of the different and multilingual web sites and more than 25,000 documents into a singular web content platform – that saves tremendous costs on rolling out new languages, designs and effort for content management.

• Added new languages to the platform

15 new languages are now included across the site, including non-western character-based languages such as Arabic, Russian, Chinese, Korean and Japanese.

• New navigational framework and faceted search

Using Hippo’s Cloud based Context Aware server – the navigation now automatically optimizes based on traffic into the site – including a faceted search that helps keep the navigation consistent across the entire scope of the website.

• Doubled speed of the site – SEO optimized

In a “before-and-after” snapshot of the website – adding Hippo CMS and optimizing the content through Hippo’s delivery platform has more than doubled the speed of the site.

Result
Less costs & better performance

The results have been tremendously helpful for the Ministry in their effort to both save expense, and optimize their results. “Our mission is to represent and serve the Dutch citizens, businesses and institutions in more than 150 cities all across the world. Our website is a direct reflection of that mission,” said Gerco Broekstra, Webcoordinator of The Ministry of Foreign Affairs. “Moving to the cloud-based Hippo CMS has enabled us to both double the performance of our site for search engines, while consolidating it into one easy-to-use system. This helps us communicate faster and much more efficiently. We’re very happy to have standardized on the Hippo CMS platform.”
Moving to a Cloud based Web Content Framework

Open Source, Cloud based infrastructures can provide a number of substantial business benefits:

- **Reduce operational expenses over the long-term** by giving the organization freedom from infrastructure limitations and more freedom and flexibility to expand
- **Better and simpler scalability in order to meet demands now and in the future**
- **Enable hybrid solutions** – where a common repository can be placed in with existing WCMS or Ecommerce systems to enable quick and efficient deployment across channels
- **Better access for developers** – enabling remote management of web content management channels
- **Better quality assurance programs** – by enabling “test-beds” and processes to be run in cloud based infrastructures
- **Less expensive and more capable infrastructures to guarantee better uptime**

But in the end – the true benefit is in enabling the enterprise to move more quickly. In today’s market – the global enterprise must be ready to adapt to new content channels, new methods of conversing with customers and new governance models to mitigate risks while maximizing opportunities.

With an open source, cloud-based infrastructure – the enterprise has the ability to do just that.

**Resources**

- **Emarketer**
  Study On Blogging Growth
- **Gartner**
  Macro Trends On Technology and Digital Media
- **Hippo Context Aware Content Marketing**
- **Gartner**
  Says Worldwide SaaS Revenue Within the Enterprise Application Software Market to Surpass $8.5 Billion in 2010
- **Gartner**
  Says Worldwide Saas Revenue Will Be $14.5 Billion in 2012
- **3 CIO Insights**
  - IT Agility Embrazed by Top-Performing Companies
- **The Siren Song of Open Source CMS**
At Hippo, we believe, digital is here to make our lives a little bit better.

Hippo sets the standard for how organizations can bring real-time relevance to their audience and is the foundation for personalized communication across all channels: mobile, social and web. Our purpose is to facilitate innovation so our customers can create digital miracles. We serve our customers, by creating a platform that is fun to use, easy to implement and open for innovation.

Hippo CMS is a powerful, enterprise-class foundation to deliver outstanding Customer Experiences based on Enterprise Agility and Innovation Power.

Hippo CMS is open source, 100% Java and convinces with its lean product architecture that is built for uptime, security and performance.

Our dedicated, Certified Partner Network delivers Hippo Awesomeness around the globe to our valued customers. Hippo is proud to serve organizations such as Disney, British Telecom, Dolce & Gabbana, Max Bahr, the Dutch Police, Thomson Reuters and Crédit Agricole.

Hippo is headquartered in Amsterdam, The Netherlands and Boston, USA.

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