

Cloud Drives the Future – An Open Cloud Declaration Version 1

14 November 2013

Introduction

We recognise that for Cloud to succeed, its customers need to have confidence in it. Similarly, the benefits of Cloud and its efficiencies of scope and scale can only be realized in a regulatory environment that supports responsible global information flows.

We, therefore support a global and open approach to Cloud technologies and solutions, which we believe will provide the greatest long term benefit for users and suppliers alike. Such Cloud solutions can offer opportunities to Cloud service providers to work globally or within defined borders as they choose while still being compliant with applicable legal and policy requirements.

Cloud offers a unique opportunity to realise advantages on a global scale. Cloud is by nature a global technology responding to IT requirements in the age of globalisation. Cloud provides computing power without limitations to space and time, thus enabling collaboration on any level required, be it local, regional, or within globally integrated organisations and set ups – and across organisational boundaries if desired, e.g. in the context of open innovation. The respective configurations can be set according to customer needs and requirements.

Cloud enables an availability of technology resources on a 7/24 scale. Cloud technology providers will ensure the respective kind of service level by leveraging the same mechanisms of global integration making sure that expert help and back-end management capabilities are available in a distributed and usually globally operating workforce whenever the customer is in need of help. Industry in Europe can thus provide first class services and exploit the potential for growth which Cloud offers for technology users and vendors alike. We, therefore, caution against prematurely closing this off by turning, even inadvertently, to restrictive approaches which will limit the scope and the benefits of cloud. We need to avoid taking short sighted decisions now which will damage the growth prospects for Cloud and the benefits it can bring to everyone.

Cloud solutions are best supported by global open standards which have broad global acceptance. Standardization efforts, however, should focus on promoting technical interoperability and not try to force a homogeneity of offerings.

Industry has to rise to the challenge through its own actions, and work with Governments to ensure that the unique value offered to organisations by Cloud services can be optimized to the benefit of all participants.

In this Declaration, sponsored by OpenForum Europe, we call on all industry, Government, and International Institutions to work together on a common set of Founding Open Principles that must be followed to ensure the cloud is open, competitive and delivers the choice, economic advantages, flexibility and agility organizations demand:

Founding Open Principles

1. Cloud providers should continue to collaborate openly (including with other stakeholders) to address challenges to cloud adoption (security, integration, data portability, interoperability, governance/management, metering/monitoring) through the appropriate development and use of technical standards and nomenclature.
2. All stakeholders in cloud computing – including standards organisations, certification bodies, governments – should work together to promote transparency and good governance throughout the value chain and should make sure that their efforts are complementary.
3. Cloud providers should readily and openly commit to relevant existing standards where appropriate. The IT industry has already put significant investment in global standards organisations and the development of global standards relevant for Cloud computing.
4. When new standards (or adjustments to existing standards) are needed, we must be judicious and pragmatic to avoid creating duplication or conflict as well as too many standards.
5. We must ensure that standards promote innovation, security and technical interoperability and do not inhibit them.
6. When certification is implemented it must draw on global standards as reference points. There should be competition and choice in the market place between certification schemes according to customers' requirements and these should be technology and business model neutral.
7. Trust is an important element of Cloud adoption. Cloud operators should provide appropriate privacy and security protections for customer information. This includes the understanding that Cloud operators work within local legal guidelines and take into account the existing privacy protections for individuals' personal information.

8. Any community effort around the open cloud¹ should take customer needs into account as a major driver, not just the technical needs of cloud providers;. They should be tested or verified against real customer requirements.
9. Cloud providers must not use their market position to lock customers into their particular platforms and limit customer choice of providers.
10. Governments should make use of their market position as purchasers to promote competition and openness around Cloud solutions and refrain from restricting choice of cloud solutions through mandatory requirements such as location of data centres, specific contract terms, unique certification requirements or codes. They should maximise the competitive opportunity for all suppliers.

¹'Open Cloud' as used here is a reference to an open approach to both technical and commercial processes by which cloud services should be developed and operated in a transparent, collaborative environment that enables suppliers to compete on a level playing field, and for users to adopt services with trust and confidence.