

White paper

Fujitsu Cloud Service K5: Removing pain and complexity in the enterprise

When cloud-based computing first became available, it was billed as a way for companies to free their services and applications from the costly and hard-to-scale bonds of legacy architecture. However, many enterprises have since come to discover that proprietary cloud services come with their own limitations. Such limitations can make it difficult and expensive to migrate to other providers.



Introduction

When cloud-based computing first became available, it was billed as a way for companies to free their services and applications from the costly and hard-to-scale bonds of legacy architecture. However, many enterprises have since come to discover that proprietary cloud services come with their own limitations. Such limitations can make it difficult and expensive to migrate to other providers.

Fujitsu developed its Cloud Service K5 to eliminate those limitations so businesses can reap the full value of a move to the cloud.

Because it's open-source-based, K5 provides customers with confidence that they can deploy new services and applications without having to worry about being locked into proprietary vendor technologies. As a true platform for digital business, K5 also works in any environment, whether that's a public cloud, a virtual private cloud, a bare-metal system or VMware hypervisor environment to enable the cloud delivery of typically difficult to license workloads such as SAP.

What's more, Fujitsu's cloud platform ensures that enterprises are able to deploy emerging new technologies such as data analytics and the Internet of Things if and when it makes business sense for them to do so. That's because K5 is just one of four sets of capabilities within Fujitsu's advanced MetaArc portfolio of services for digital business.

Big-picture benefits

For most enterprises, digital transformation is not an easy process. Companies eyeing such programmes already tend to have significant levels of IT complexity and pain, and if they don't address these proactively their transformation initiatives can make things even worse.

Where are pain points most likely to lie for such enterprises? Many of them have accumulated over time as businesses expand and evolve.

A recent analysis by the Boston Consulting Group, for example, identified four primary causes of IT complexity in organisations that are candidates for digital transformation. They included rapid growth, post-merger integration difficulties, poor collaboration between IT and other areas of the business, and cost-driven underinvestment in technology. These factors, in turn, lead to needlessly complex data landscapes, poor governance and labyrinthine IT infrastructure and application landscapes.

"Simplifying IT is an essential task for any IT organisation that wants to stay competitive,"¹ the BCG analysis found. "It is also a critical foundation for digital transformation."

By providing enterprise users with flexibility and agility while migrating to the cloud, Fujitsu's Cloud Service K5 does more than eliminate much of the pain and complexity involved with such moves. Coupled with the capital expenditure savings expected with a shift away from legacy infrastructure, easier cloud migrations also free up time and costs in other ways.

Freed from the demands of deploying and managing legacy systems in favour of a platform-as-a-service approach, company IT teams have more time to develop value-added services and to accelerate business innovation. Enterprises test and roll out new offerings more quickly,

which can help to grow revenue streams and new customer markets.

By being assured of secure, up-to-date services that can quickly scale up or down to meet changing business demands, enterprises adopting the K5 platform also find it easier to assess the value of legacy applications. In doing this, businesses often discover that some applications are ageing past the point of usefulness or are used by so few people that it makes more sense to phase them out or replace them.

More strategic, customer-centric business

So why are so many organisations today launching all-out digital transformation efforts? The primary reason is a desire to boost customer appeal and retention in an increasingly competitive global market.

Technology and business models today need to be focused squarely on the customer experience, noted a recent research report from Forrester Consulting.

"Revenue is not king when it comes to digital strategy – that throne has been usurped by margins, speed-to-market and customer satisfaction," stated the Forrester report, 'Digital Transformation in the Age of the Customer'. "While sales will always be important, our study found that how the sale is made is what matters. When we asked firms to rank their top drivers for digital transformation, the most common responses were that they look to digital to help them sell profitably (58 per cent), quickly (51 per cent) and with superior customer satisfaction (48 per cent)."

Companies that use Fujitsu's K5 to rationalise and modernise their applications and systems can develop new, more strategic applications that benefit them in two key ways.

One, new apps especially built for current business needs can be developed and deployed more inexpensively than before, with fewer risks. That's because Cloud Service K5 is built on open-source technologies, ensuring that applications will work no matter what environments they're deployed in.

Two, the faster innovation and greater scalability provided by the K5 platform means that companies can become less reactive and more proactive as business and customer needs evolve. This helps not only to save costs but enables enterprises to serve their customers better and more quickly.

For example, a retail business that faces high-volume customer demands during the holiday shopping season no longer has to maintain a year-round legacy infrastructure that's up to the task. Instead, it can use K5's cloud services to scale up quickly as the peak of holiday shopping approaches, then rapidly scale down again when the season ends. That can save considerable costs on not only infrastructure maintenance but on software licensing fees as well. For a major retailer, those savings can add up to many millions of pounds during a single season.

This might sound like something that any cloud service can offer but it's not. Fujitsu's Cloud Service K5 offers a number of notable advantages over other cloud services, even the most well-known and widely used ones. We'll look at some of those advantages in the following section.

¹<https://www.bcgperspectives.com/content/articles/technology-digital-simplifying-it-accelerate-digital-transformation/>

The K5 difference

Rather than just a cloud-based source of applications and services, K5 is a platform for enabling digital business in the cloud, no matter how an enterprise chooses to implement that.

One key benefit comes from K5 being underpinned by open source software. Why is open source so important? By being accessible to a global community of developers, open source ensure that digital business solutions work effectively in a variety of cloud environments, which significantly reduces the risks of enterprise lock-in. Customers that sign on with other, proprietary cloud service providers can find it extremely difficult – and costly – to move those services elsewhere when their business needs change.

For example, consider one global healthcare organisation that built its application specifically to work on a proprietary cloud service provider's platform. Over time, that enterprise's circumstances have evolved to include needs that can no longer be easily met on that platform but moving to another provider at this point would require the organisation to redevelop its application from the ground up – an expensive and time-consuming proposition – to deploy it elsewhere.

By contrast, Fujitsu Cloud Service K5 provides out-of-the-box support for the Openstack community APIs so customers can develop and deploy new applications and services quickly and easily, with the added assurance that these will work in any environment, and for any workloads, that they choose.

An enterprise using K5, for instance, could develop an application that runs on OpenStack or Cloud Foundry software and know that application will work anywhere because of its open-source foundation. This provides K5 users with far more flexibility and choice in terms of service provider contracts and adoption of new technologies.

Open source is seeing "increasing traction"² among enterprises because it enables faster innovation and transformation, according to the analyst IDC. Many other organisations, ranging from small start-ups to large public-sector agencies, are seeing the same trend.

"An entirely new conversation on the role of open source is taking place³ and it's being led by the data teams in IT who are burnt out on overspending on the old school vendors," according to EnterpriseDB president and CEO Ed Boyajian. "The conversation is being driven by the convergence of new digital business transformation initiatives, the rapid expansion of mature open source data technologies, the fast-growing list of success stories and ROI, and the maturity of companies that deliver these open source technologies."

Fujitsu's platform in action

Where can enterprise users take advantage of K5's benefits? First launched last year in Japan, Fujitsu Cloud Service K5 is now available in the UK as well. Over the coming year, it will also roll out in Japan as well as in Australia, Finland, Germany, Singapore, Spain and the US.

Enterprise users that have adopted the platform are discovering a variety of cost and operational benefits, thanks to K5's support for new technologies such as advanced data analytics, artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things.

For example, a Japan-based utilities organisation that uses sensor technologies to test water quality has been able to use the platform to improve its operations in several ways. K5 has made it possible for the organisation to predict the failure of components before they occur, which allows proactive resolution of problems... and, in the long run, reduces costs.

Another enterprise user, a Japanese bank, has used K5 to develop a new mobile app for its customers. With the help of K5's built-in API gateway and open platform technologies, the bank was able to build an app connected to its backend systems much faster than it had been able to do before, reducing time-to-market while at the same time improving customer experience.

Fujitsu Cloud Service K5's Java development capabilities, meanwhile, have enabled a global telco to build and release new software 30 per cent faster than before, while also helping to simplify highly complicated architectures.

Conclusion

The K5 open-source-based platform was designed to provide enterprise customers with a highly flexible, scalable and cost-effective way to migrate legacy infrastructure services onto the cloud. In addition to delivering those benefits, however, K5 is proving effective at helping organisations identify new opportunities for time and cost savings, service improvements, expanded markets and future-focused innovations.

K5 is helping to unlock additional value from existing business data and systems that were previously unavailable or difficult to access. That's why Fujitsu calls it a true digital business platform: Cloud Service K5 not only helps to remove the pain and complexity of today's applications and services but enables enterprises to develop innovations for tomorrow just as easily and painlessly.

²<http://www.idc.com/getdoc.jsp?containerId=US41073416>

³<http://www.enterprisedb.com/news-events/press-releases/mit-technology-review-and-enterprisedb-launch-vision-talks-executive-round>

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