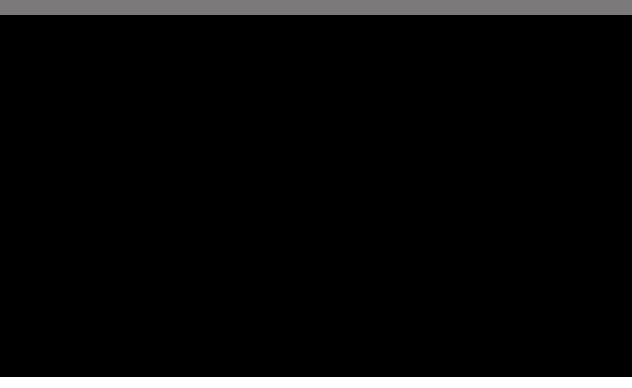


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# Cloud Computing Spins Out Of Control (But Maybe That's Not Such A Bad Thing)



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*I track how technology innovations move markets and careers* [FULL BIO](#) ▼  
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Are these cloud investments being made wisely, and are achieving real business gains? Or are companies gobbling up cloud services and simply adding them to unwieldy and unnecessarily complicated technology infrastructures? The impact on business, real or simply hoped-for, is one concern. The other is whether the people needed to sort through and run these implementations can stay on top of this mass movement.

In one sense, cloud seems to be helping to reduce internal IT sprawl. A sizable segment, 40%, report their company's data center footprint is shrinking compared to three years ago. However, one type of sprawl is being replaced by another. There is a growing blob of unused and underused service subscriptions that corporate funds are flowing into, with no ways to check or coordinate usage. Only 28% have a process to control public cloud sprawl. Only 37% have visibility into the historical performance of their public cloud services, and fewer than half, 44%, are able to verify the scope of their public cloud consumption.

But, again, while this is not a good situation for many, it is symptomatic of larger forces at work. The cloud revolution is freeing up technology for innovative and entrepreneurial opportunities, enabling people at all levels in organizations to pursue new ways of thinking and doing business. The chaos of multiple, unfettered cloud access may be the best route to disruptive innovation, versus attempts to control and confine it. A while back, I heard Michael Dortch, a highly regarded IT thinker, advocate for "MDM" in enterprises, as in "My Device Matters." Let me add *MCM*, as in "My Cloud Matters." Users know best what technology services they need, and IT departments need to adapt to that *MDM/MCM* thinking. Cloud provides avenues for teams of employees and partners to explore new vistas. Innovation springs from hundreds or thousands of minds collectively working on new ideas. Empowered teams seeking to design new products, new processes, or resolutions to problems have an abundance of cloud-based resources.

The key to success in this new climate isn't about technology, it's about management vision. The organization -- and its leaders -- need a forward-thinking, entrepreneurial culture that capitalizes on this computing power. Organizations that are restrictive, risk-averse and hierarchical are likely to find themselves overwhelmed and flying blind, forever fighting an endless battle to gain control over fast-changing technology forces.

This is the thinking behind the innovation labs many companies are supporting, in the hopes of capturing and bottling the energy seen with startups. Witness the way many companies in the staid and conservative insurance industry are buying or launching "insurtech" companies with the intentions of prodding their business lines with jolts of new electricity. These are efforts that can't be contained or controlled within restrictive hierarchies or infrastructures.

Technology changes so much from year to year that whatever enterprises attempt to tamp down and regulate this year will be surpassed by new developments the next. Witness the rise of mobile computing. Employees want to be part of the innovation story -- and technology paves the way.

Again, we see organized chaos as the new rule for business in the 2010s. The rise of cloud resources available to all is driving a new approach to delivering value -- open up technology to boost innovation, even if it is somewhat messy and hard to contain. To reiterate, innovation is very messy anyway.

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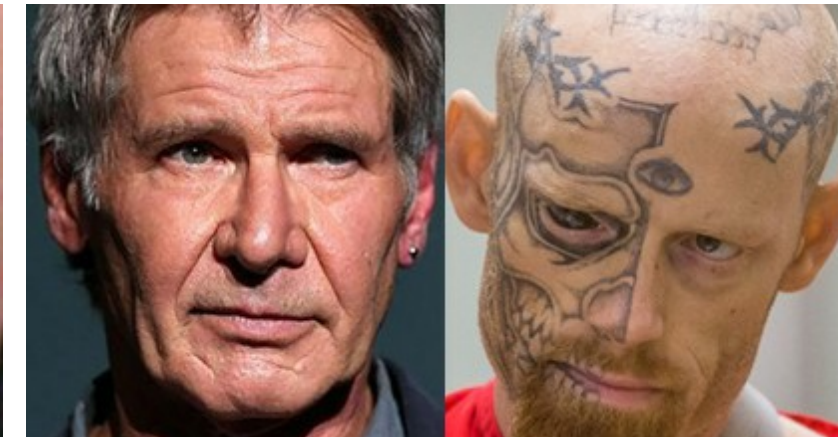
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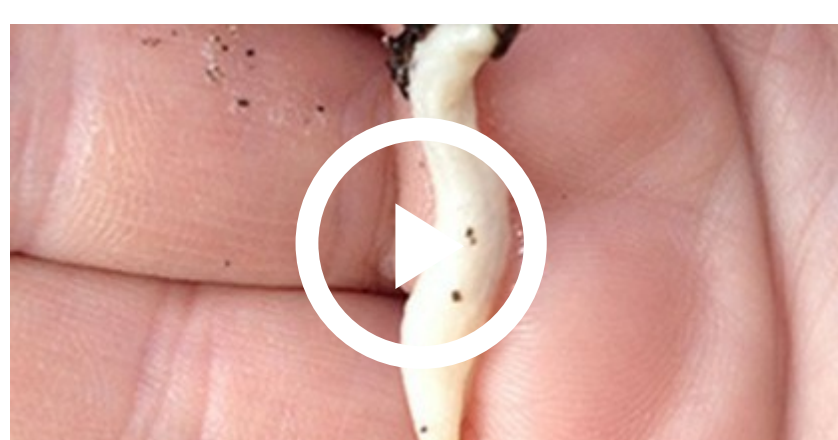
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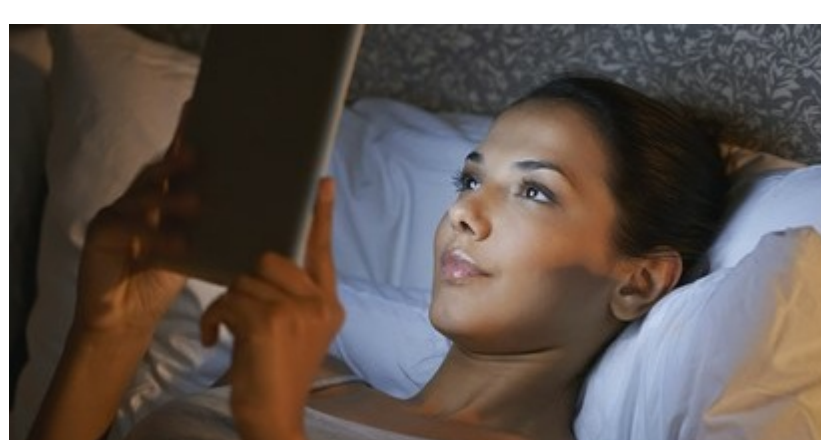
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