

TREND BRIEF

IT AUTOMATION: WHAT IT MEANS AND WHY IT MATTERS NOW

The Road to Digital Transformation

ARE YOU READY FOR THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION?

A Gartner, Inc. survey found that 59 percent of surveyed IT professionals believe their IT organizations are unprepared for the digital business of the next two years.⁶

The Digital Economy Is Here

In the past few years, people have talked about the rise of the digital economy and how it will fundamentally change life as we know it for all businesses. That day has come. The digital economy is here, and it is growing at bewildering speeds. IDC predicts that by 2019, 40 percent of IT projects will create new digital services and revenue streams that monetize data.¹

Just consider the meteoric rise of the giants of Internet search and e-commerce. Google was founded in 1998. Today, it is an indispensable service used by millions of people around the world.² Amazon opened an online store in 1995. In 2015, Amazon became the fastest company ever to reach \$100 billion in annual sales.³ In this new application-driven world, startup companies like Airbnb and Uber can become global powerhouses seemingly overnight. Along the way, they are changing the ground rules for their industries.

And it's not just the young upstarts that are fueling the growth of the digital economy. Well-entrenched companies are rethinking their business models and investing heavily in software, data, and analytics. General Electric, for example, has set the goal to become a top 10 software company,⁴ and already has become a recognized leader in software for the Internet of Things (IoT).⁵ As the GE experience suggests, every company is now a software company.

To succeed in this new software-driven era, companies need to accelerate the development and the delivery of the applications that keep them competitive. This reality of the digital economy increases the pressure on IT organizations to reinvent their processes to drive faster delivery of the IT resources that empower the business.

CAN YOU PROVISION INFRASTRUCTURE QUICKLY?

A Forrester study found that only 24 percent of companies can provision infrastructure in hours. The rest take days or weeks.⁸

The Need for Broader Virtualization

IT organizations began laying the groundwork for the digital transformation years ago when they started virtualizing server and storage resources. Today, many organizations now have server virtualization rates that exceed 75 percent, according to Gartner.⁷

Numbers like those are encouraging. Virtualization fundamentally changes the way IT services are provisioned. It makes it possible for IT organizations to deliver compute and storage resources on demand. Along the way, virtualization enables a wide range of operational efficiencies, including the automation of processes for configuring and provisioning IT services.

Yet despite these gains, significant barriers still block the road to the truly agile IT organization. In particular, the provisioning of network and security services is still often carried out with time-consuming manual processes that are distributed across multiple siloed IT groups. These processes can be burdened by errors, rework, and organizational bureaucracy.

While IT has improved some aspects of the provisioning process with scripts and enhanced configuration management tools, those gains haven't been enough to achieve the high speed of delivery or high levels of operational efficiency that a digital business requires. The provisioning of networking and security still requires a disproportionate amount of resources—in terms of both time and budget—to properly complete a service-delivery request.

Automate IT to Gain Agility

While most companies have virtualized their compute and storage environments, many lag behind on the virtualization of the network and associated security services. In this next step in the virtualization journey, the network and security services that now occur in the physical infrastructure—including routing, switching, load balancing, and creating firewalls—are decoupled from the infrastructure and abstracted into the data center virtualization layer. All services are then deployed and controlled entirely in software.

From an IT agility standpoint, network virtualization is a lot like server virtualization. You achieve the same automated operational model as you do with virtual machines and realize many of the same benefits. You can produce a unique virtual network in minutes, and then programmatically create, move, copy, delete, and restore virtual networks as needed, without reconfiguring the underlying physical hardware or topology. All these actions are carried out independently of the physical network.

When you virtualize network and security services, you're poised to make broader use of automation to accelerate the delivery of IT services. Automation helps you eliminate wait times, reduce unnecessary rework, and break through the bottlenecks that come with manual processes. It all adds up to a game-changing level of IT agility.

ARE YOU PLANNING FOR AUTOMATION?

A Dimensional Research study found that 55 percent of IT professionals are planning for automated infrastructure and application deployment.⁹

Here's the Bottom Line

When you embrace an approach that fully automates the delivery and management of infrastructure and applications, including network and security operations, you are positioned to accelerate service delivery and respond faster to the needs of the business in the digital economy. Automation helps you eliminate bottlenecks in the IT service delivery pipeline, streamline workflow processes, and increase security and agility.

VMware gets you there today with a combination of technologies that automate and accelerate the end-to-end IT service delivery lifecycle. The combined capabilities of these natively integrated products empower your IT organization to fully automate the delivery of secure, scalable, and high performing multi-tier applications, while maintaining control, governance, and visibility over your IT resources.

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¹ IDC PRESS RELEASE. "IDC REVEALS WORLDWIDE CIO AGENDA 2017 PREDICTIONS." NOVEMBER 2, 2016.

² GOOGLE COMPANY OVERVIEW.

³ AMAZON. 2015 LETTER TO SHAREHOLDERS.

⁴ BUSINESS INSIDER. "JEFF IMMELT: GE IS ON TRACK TO BECOME A 'TOP 10 SOFTWARE COMPANY.'" JANUARY 29, 2015.

⁵ GENERAL ELECTRIC. "ANALYST FIRM RECOGNIZES GE AS A LEADER IN IOT SOFTWARE PLATFORMS."

⁶ GARTNER, INC. PRESS RELEASE. "GARTNER SURVEY FINDS THAT TWO-FIFTHS OF IT PROFESSIONALS CONSIDER THEIR IT ORGANISATION READY FOR DIGITAL BUSINESS." JULY 13, 2016.

⁷ GARTNER NEWS RELEASE. "GARTNER SAYS WORLDWIDE SERVER VIRTUALIZATION MARKET IS REACHING ITS PEAK." MAY 12, 2016.

⁸ FORRESTER. "ACCELERATE YOUR VIRTUALIZATION AND CLOUD JOURNEY." A FORRESTER CONSULTING THOUGHT LEADERSHIP PAPER COMMISSIONED BY VMWARE. JUNE 2016.

⁹ DIMENSIONAL RESEARCH. "MULTI-CLOUD ENVIRONMENTS ARE BECOMING THE NEW NORMAL FOR IT, DIMENSIONAL RESEARCH." FEBRUARY 2016.

