

CLOUD AGE

Dear Linux Magazine Reader,

I wonder, sometimes, where the next 10 years of high tech is actually leading us. I know that new creations arrive every day. Dazzling products appear; companies eclipse other companies for “market share.” Mergers and acquisitions transform the landscape. What I’m wondering is, how much of this is actually going to change what we are doing now, and how much of it is extra stuff we didn’t know we had to do before all this started.

I should start by revealing a secret about the relationship of the publishing world with the term “new.” “New” is the fuel that runs almost every engine in high-tech publishing. What we call “hype” is the new mixed with the mythic – a bold proclamation, often carried off with supreme artistry, that assumes everything new is transformative and revolutionary. Our culture, our economy, and our politics are all about cozying up to the new, and publishing, which is the mirror of our culture, is all new all the time.

Of course, no magazine, website, or cable channel wants to base its existence purely around a fascination with the new. They all say they write about what’s *important*. The problem is that these two tendencies to court the new and affirm the important converge around the assumption that everything *new* is *important*.

And all too often in the popular press, the new is not just necessary but also sufficient. The way you report on a technology is to mirror the excitement attendant to its newness. We’re not sure readers really buy into that, and honestly, we think that’s one of the reasons why so many magazines that were in print a few years ago are no longer around.

For us, *new* and *important* are not the answer but the beginning of the question – the vantage point from which to ask: “What do I do about it? How do I get this running on my own network?” Twitter and Facebook, for instance (or their open source equivalents), don’t receive a lot of coverage in this magazine because they don’t really lead to the kinds of practical questions we like to ask.

Cloud, however, is a fundamental change to the whole IT profession. The physical reality of a server room, and its accompanying bundle of cables, disks, manuals, and power cords, is an enduring image of the IT industry. Every company has (or had) a server room. Sometime in the future, it is possible our networks will just need a way to connect, but, perhaps more likely, the cloud will play an important role in a complex amalgam of remote services with a local, hardware-based presence. The complexity of configuring such a system is actually

quite daunting, and simply affirming the newness offers little comfort to the decision makers who have to envision, configure, and manage these systems. They’ll need new tools. They’ll have to rewrite scripts and modify procedures and solve new problems related to the daily business of maximizing efficiency and maintaining connectivity.

That’s the kind of new we can cover the way we like to cover things: new tools, new configurations, new and different perspectives to the practical side of networking. We’ve been thinking about how to provide sufficient coverage to the cloud phenomenon, and we are thinking the best solution is to go online with it. Is this an official announcement? Let’s just say it is a teaser. Watch our website in July, or check out the site for our sister pub, *Admin* magazine (<http://www.admin-magazine.com>). We’ll see you in the clouds.



Joe Casad,
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