

Beer in the Cloud

My theme was beer. That was my most recent data center naming schema theme and, well it worked. Beer is so varied. Those dark, smooth Porters and Stouts. The light Pilsners and the hoppy IPAs. It was easy to map the characteristics of some of my favorite beers to various servers in my data center based on their own unique qualities. The big, dark monster set of servers housing the Exchange cluster was Guinness (one of my personal favorites). The 1U pizza box that we inherited from the acquisition and were stuck with: Pabst Blue Ribbon. A new server, with all the latest bells and whistles and all the RAM I thought I would ever need: Newcastle. Whatever the server, there was a beer to fit.

Alas, those days are gone. The idea of a server that is dedicated to a task and exists as a stand-alone device has all but faded. Technology has turned the corner. But, do not worry. There is still some big iron that you can name.

Today, all the servers that we purchased and the ones that we have yet to purchase can live on the same chassis. That is right, a single chassis. Hypervisor technology, like VMware's vSphere, now allows our virtual machines to exist on and move around between multiple pieces of equipment and locations. Today, we can assign all of the virtual machines to our Cisco® Unified Computing System™ (UCS) and scale it to whatever size our organization needs. One box with a lot of resources. Your entire data center on a single hardware platform, managed from a single point. That is Cisco UCS.

When you combine this concept with centralized storage and a network fabric that understands the requirements for virtual machines to move to various hardware devices, and you wrap all of that together with a management tool like vCenter from VMware, you have a solution that is truly elegant. At that point, you have a cloud.

We are referring to the cloud as a noun, a tangible thing. A cloud is an array of hardware that, when assembled, provides a physical platform for a virtualized environment. This object then becomes an adjective, when the term cloud describes how virtual devices move around within this architecture based on policy and rules. Within this cloud of compute, memory, and storage resources, our applications on those virtual machines can live a long and stable life. They can reside on the most available hardware and pull resources from idle processors while using the fastest memory. They are in the cloud. There are times where the term the cloud is used to describe a location, a place where applications reside and are offered as a service. This model is called Software as a Service (SaaS). This too, is appropriate, in that the software being offered is being served from a cloud environment.

Cisco UCS is the most revolutionary concept in centralized computing today. Combined with hardware and software from our ecosystem of partners, Cisco is bringing the dream of simplified management to your business, no matter the size. The Cisco UCS B-Series and C-Series solutions are a family of products that can replace your server infrastructure and begin transforming your network into a next-generation virtualization platform.

If you just cannot get by without naming your servers, then go ahead and give your new Cisco UCS solution a name. It is going to be the best beer you have ever had.

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