Simplifying MDM On The Cloud, And Is it Right for You?

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In today's world, there is greater awareness concerning MDM than ever before. MDM technologies have matured over the years. Cloud infrastructures have become mainstream with advancements in supporting technologies, reduction in bandwidth costs, and improved security. These factors are contributing to much buzz around MDM, particularly about MDM on the cloud. When organizations take on the MDM journey, there are many deciding factors that they need to consider. Adopting the cloud model is a major decision, as it requires careful planning covering areas such as strategy, architecture, implementation, and sustainment. Are you considering cloud as an option for your MDM deployments? How is the cloud factor influencing decisions today, and how will this movement shape in the future?

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Life In The Enterprise Landscape

From clients who are ready to start with the initial phase of their MDM program, we often hear this - How soon can we achieve key business goals? With the right platform and effective consultation, we can help clients streamline the development cycle to reduce implementation time and costs drastically. However, in many enterprises, the rollout of new applications and systems requires extensive planning around hardware and software procurement, installation, configuration, and training. From planning to acquisition to rollout, these processes often require collaboration between multiple functional teams, due to which project timelines get delayed. As a result, even as the short development cycle is in alignment with business objectives, project deliveries get impacted due to infrastructure for development, QA, and (or) production steps.

So, Who is Walking On Cloud?

Business applications have gradually been moving to the cloud over the past years. This momentum has increased over time, and more mission-critical processes are moving to the cloud. For instance, company data from Dun & Bradstreet is now available in the SalesForce.com cloud allowing businesses to identify over hundreds of million business enterprises uniquely. Another application example is Acxiom cloud service. It enables consuming enterprise systems to make cloud service calls that help in customer identification. Acxiom maintains a collection of 500 million consumer contacts in one of the largest data centers in the world. It's highly valuable for corporations to tap into this dataset in the cloud.

Beyond business applications, enterprise cloud infrastructure is also popular, with strong offerings now available in the market. Cloud platform services from Amazon, Microsoft, IBM, and Google, wherein customers can purchase desired hardware size, operating systems, and support options, are available for businesses to integrate with their legacy infrastructure. These on-demand solutions significantly improve the enterprise's IT agility. It allows them to augment their infrastructure, and rapidly address critical business needs. In this era, cloud base technological advancements have helped remove major barriers that had previously prevented its inclusion in enterprise deployments. Most businesses see security as the top consideration, i.e., one of the many areas where decision-makers have to ensure meeting the enterprise security standards. From business applications to infrastructure components, more organizations are leveraging cloud-based applications & services for their mission-critical processes.

The MDM Journey

In typical in-house deployment solutions, we frequently find businesses struggling to align resources to build and deploy hardware/software for their MDM projects. Often, business stakeholders have little appetite for these constraints as they prohibit them from achieving their business goals. With MDM on readily available cloud infrastructure, companies can drastically reduce implementation cost, time, and project risks. For typical MDM implementations, tasks like initial load and bulk cross-matching to create indices are very common. These steps are known to be resource-intensive one-time activities that are required at the initial stage of implementation as well as just before the go-live date. To accommodate these requirements using on-premise infrastructure, clients often have to do extra planning and acquire additional hardware for the processing period. Any delays in procuring such hardware affect the overall timelines and increase project risks. With cloud-based MDM, such risks are greatly minimized. In some cases, clients are opting to perform only resource-intensive activities on the cloud to ease the stress on their infrastructure. To start with, stress testing or bulk-cross matching is amongst the popular choices.

So, What's MDM On The Cloud?

MDM on the cloud can be a secure, robust option for delivering scalable and speedy time-to-value solutions for enterprises. When compared to cloud-based MDM solutions, in-house MDM deployments require you to spend more effort in configuration and tuning the new hardware/software during the implementation phase. MDM on cloud essentially eliminates many risks by utilizing expert teams that have experience building and deploying MDM applications. On the cloud, MDM can still be customized to fit specific business rules and integrated with other enterprise application systems as required. Flexible architecture options are available to accommodate specific SLA requirements and enterprise needs. With a hosted model, clients are finding that the most significant benefit is not in the project phase, but in the simplicity of sustaining the system in the long run. Cloud MDM allows for a flexible support model, and clients can easily adopt MDM software upgrades over product lifecycles. All these can greatly reduce project risks and up-keep costs.

Many of the early adaptors who are introducing cloud technologies in their MDM programs are identifying reference data management as an ideal candidate to start on the cloud. Reference Data Management (RDM) solutions refer to the management of corporate reference data. They do not have PII (Personally Identifiable Info) considerations, which are present in other MDM projects. The relatively lighter implementation scope also helps to demonstrate results quickly in the new platform. Many major MDM vendors have cloud-based MDM offerings. Customers can compare these cloud-based options against on-premise solutions and select the option that best suits their needs.

Is It Righ For You?

Organizations need to consider the benefits and challenges of MDM on the cloud and make a decision that is best fit for their unique requirements and capabilities. For instance, one of the best MDM practices we try to highlight to our clients is "Legacy Application integration." Engage your application groups early and defining the requirement is critical. This helps in bringing clarity to your organization's integration and architecture options, which will have a great impact on your MDM program. Here are some common considerations:

- Existing investments in cloud
- Current architectural standards
- Data privacy/security requirements
- Type of master data in use
- Jurisdictional factors
- Types of integrations required

We have seen a situation where cloud MDM cannot be an effective option due to specific privacy or government data residency requirements. It is critical to identify this type of constraint early so your solution can be successful.

Many businesses today have adopted cloud applications in a big way. They are considering MDM on the cloud as well. If you are involved in the decision-making process, and you are not certain if you have covered all the key factors, there is help! Many MDM experts in the cloud space are now available who can assist in the assessment phase, and help design a solution that is right for your organization.

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About

Mastech InfoTrellis partners with enterprises to help them achieve their business objectives by leveraging the power of data to derive deep, analytical insights about their business and its operations. We accelerate business velocity, minimize costs, and drastically improve corporate resiliency through personalized, process-oriented programs, consisting of strategy, data management (including master data management), business intelligence and reporting, data engineering, predictive analytics, and advanced analytics. Part of the NYSE-listed,$177.2M, digital transformation IT services company, Mastech Digital; we drive businesses forward around the world, with offices spread across the US, Canada, India, and Singapore.