



Above the clouds Taming multicloud chaos

As the cloud proliferates, so too does operational complexity. Are you wondering what is the answer to manage your growing cloud sprawl? You're not alone.

The time has come to take control and improve the security of your multicloud environment. To wrangle the chaos and complexity of multiple clouds, enlightened enterprises are beginning to turn to a layer of abstraction and automation. Known alternately as metacloud or supercloud, this family of tools and techniques can help cut through the complexity of multicloud environments by providing access to common services such as storage and compute, AI, data, security, operations, governance, and application development and deployment.

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How does a complex enterprise tame the multicloud chaos with metacloud? Start by considering all of the required aspects of cloud management. Just taking a policy-centric approach to address the issue by defining and documenting policies. While this is an effective part of the solution, it is just that—only a part. Policies alone leave too much room for manual processes, gaps in tools and lack of transparency in operations to adequately address the problem. The other extreme is technology-centric approach to taming multicloud chaos through a purely technical approach. Technology is clearly part of the answer, yet when it comes to technology—the technology itself, its capabilities and even how it is used—are also important. Moreover, technology needs to be aligned with policies and standards.

An effectively designed metacloud incorporates cloud management platform technology into a multicloud management solution to operationalize common security policies and governance using automation. Metaclouds automate the deployment of key capabilities, policies and standards across each layer of the cloud stack in multicloud environments. Through a unified portal, metacloud provides transparency into costs and service quality. Workflow management and automation provide service catalogs with built-in governance that can be enabled across the entire multicloud environment. Automation provides consistent deployment and management of IT services while reducing manual processes, helping limit human error, lowering operations costs and ensuring policy compliance. Combining orchestration with DevSecOps integration, security hardening is baked into standard configurations, security testing is automated, deployments use pre-approved services and security, standards, and budget controls are checked.

It's not only about policies and technology though. A successful metacloud deployment requires a cohesive strategy that not only considers an organization's technology and processes, but also its people. To execute a successful multicloud transformation, the enterprise needs a cloud-enabled workforce. Organizations must rethink their operating model and processes for DevSecOps, which enables them to move faster and meet evolving needs. In concert with the operating model, cultures must shift. Many agencies entered the multicloud space out of necessity, to support urgent critical business timelines, with mission need driving initial steps. To gain real benefits, there needs to be a culture shift. This means having the resources, governance, training, and tools at all levels of the organization to effectively design, deploy and operate the metacloud. Specialized skills are also needed to effectively manage the metacloud and to integrate individual cloud-based solutions. Finally, the metacloud poses a high-potential and high-risk opportunity. A lightweight metacloud center of excellence is a proven approach spanning policy, governance and roadmap to orchestrate the strategy, technology, and governance into operations. Without it, the enterprise's initial step into the metacloud is more likely to be a misstep.

As governments move to the cloud, its usage naturally expands. Sometimes, our previous habits of operating in siloes finds their way into our cloud practices. Instead of continuing to manually manage everything, take a page from the cloud vendors themselves: automate complexity management. Use commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) tools, including a cloud management platform, to establish your metacloud and manage the details for security, provisioning, rights, and more across all your cloud vendors. In addition to lowering costs, hardening security and operationalizing governance, using metacloud tools to reduce complexity means freeing humans to do more mission-aligned activities and better serve constituents. And your enterprise just may find solid footing across the multicloud landscape.

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