



Cloud Computing: A Solution for Web Analytics

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One of the major issues for Web media continues to be data. In the end, data is the thing that sets us apart. Because of interactivity, we have more information than any other medium. In fact, we have so much data, we're drowning in it. Bob Ivins, now with comScore, first stated that trying to parse web data was "like taking a drink out of a firehose." This was back when he was vice president, marketing, of I/PRO in the mid '90s. It was true then, and remains true today.

Given the size of the data cubes we have, it takes time to do everything. Simple reporting is a chore. Scheduled reporting is a good idea, but the adjustments that a media tracker or analyst must make to the data invariably necessitate exporting the waited-for report into a spreadsheet to make further refinements. The third-party ad-serving companies are lacking in dashboards and business rule capability that would help to automate reporting.

Given that this reporting takes so long, the time available to do real analysis of the data cube is sub-optimal. And, the reality is that it would take too long to crunch most of the data that folks want.

Enter the future in cloud computing. Wikipedia defines cloud computing as "a computing paradigm shift in which computing is moved away from personal computers or an individual application server to a 'cloud' of computers. Users of the cloud only need to be concerned with the computing service being asked for, because the underlying details of how it is achieved are hidden. This method of distributed computing is done by pooling computer resources and managing them via software (rather than by a human).

The services requested of a cloud are not limited to web applications, but may also include IT management tasks, such as requesting of systems, a software stack, or a specific web appliance."

I love it. Paradigm shift is back. All due to something that sounds a lot like peer-to-peer computing applied to the enterprise. Could it be that the experimentation that went on with programs like Napster 1.0 will change the face of enterprise computing?

A recent article in [Business Week](#) counted IBM, Google, Amazon, Microsoft and Yahoo at the forefront of cloud computing, which got me to thinking. Google buys DoubleClick (assuming the Europeans can clear their barriers on this). Microsoft buys aQuantive, which includes Atlas. All of a sudden the two top agency and advertiser third-party ad servers are associated with massive analytics crunching power like they've never had before. Rather than be afraid of the power that has been vested through Google and Microsoft owning so much data, let's look at this from a positive side. We could soon have the capability to answer a lot of the questions we haven't ever had the bandwidth to accomplish.

Time to think about what questions we really want to know the answers to.



About the Author

David L. Smith, CEO of Mediasmith, is an internationally known expert in the areas of new media application, media strategy, media planning and metrics, and has a number of awards to his name including an Effie and an ad:tech Individual Achievement award. Trained in the major agency media department environment, he has been in the independent media service field since 1978 when he founded Mediasmith. Smith is a pioneer in the application of computers in media, deployment of interactive advertising and media metrics. His experience ranges from participating in the creation and early usage of the first generation of advertising technology (housekeeping systems, data sources) to the current issues facing the use of metrics in the digital marketplace. He has been at the forefront of new metrics applications, with major involvement on the AAAAs, ARF, OPA and IAB national committees working to establish and refine standards in metrics, business practices and financial issues for interactive advertising. Smith has also contributed his knowledge through articles and interviews in an extensive range of media over the past two decades. He is a regular speaker at Industry events including iMedia, @d:tech, OMMA and others and writes regularly for a number of industry publications and Web sites including iMediaConnection and MediaPost. His advisory board involvement includes OPA, IAB, comScore/Media Metrix, AdEx and a number of start-up private companies. A University of Washington graduate, Smith is married with a seventeen-year-old son; plays guitar; and is a gourmet Chinese cook. You'll find him at the office early most mornings unless he is traveling with his family.

About Mediasmith

Mediasmith is a recognized leader in digital media planning and buying. We specialize in the integration of traditional and digital media, search, emerging technologies. We architect plans across all media, in all markets, in virtually all product categories utilizing the right combination of media options to help our clients grow in the increasingly fractured media environment; from planning and buying, to tracking, optimization, and reporting of ROI on all media efforts. Mediasmith remains dedicated to the evolution and standardization of digital media practices. As committed innovators, we test the latest in metrics and analytics, providing solutions that enable us to act as a catalyst for our clients' media innovations.