

# Shadows of the clouds!

Tomorrow's Cleaning's resident technology expert, Dean Hudson, Development Manager for CleanLink, describes how today's cloud technologies could have you dancing with the daffodils.



**Q** It seems that everywhere I turn, I keep hearing about 'The Cloud'. I'm told that my business needs to be 'in it' – but I'm a bit lost with it all. What is it really all about?

**A** Whenever I think about the cloud, I can't help but think of William Wordsworth (1770 – 1850) who wrote the famous poem that begins: 'I wandered lonely as a cloud'. He also wrote 'the very shadows of the clouds have power to shake me as they pass.' Now, I am quoting his words out of context, but with good reason, for cloud technologies really are shaking things up, and in a way that has resonance to Wordsworth's time.

## Early local Clouds

Back then, the local gas-works' powered the local lamp-lights that cleared the shadows and darkness of cloudy nights, and as technology evolved, these local gas-works' were replaced by local electricity generators. This model of local power generation and supply gave way to the economics of mass regional generation, supplied through an integrated 'National Grid' – although I could say 'International Grid' because ours is connected to the French one. This comes in handy when kettles all over the country are

switched on right after coronation street finishes, as French electricity is seamlessly called upon to help make the English their cups of tea.

## Regional Clouds later

Just as economics drove the massive shift in the way that light was generated and delivered in Wordsworth's time, so too now, it is happening again, but this time for the generation and delivery of the computing power that we all need today. The personal computing revolution of recent decades that gave all of us access to computing power through our own pc's and networks, is giving way to a new model, the cloud, where it is more efficient to generate computing power 'regionally' in large dedicated centers and to serve this computing power to us – as consumers, on demand – over an international grid, otherwise known as the internet! The benefits of delivering computing power to consumers in this way, are huge.

Mr. Ordinary T. Cup from Cockermouth in Cumbria can now access computing power and resources that would previously have cost a fortune. He can run his Tea & Kettle selling business with his website, order processing, shipping and accounts software all running on hardware that he has never seen, let alone bought, maintained or cleaned!

He can deploy and remotely manage 'his' servers in locations across the globe: perhaps one in Singapore (closer to his tea suppliers), another

in Brazil (closer to his coffee suppliers), and yet another in Ireland (where his cargo shipments are landed at Dublin's docks). And he will only have to pay for the actual computing power being consumed.

And if his kettle selling website should suddenly be hit by a huge surge in demand, his web hosting company can engage the computing equivalent of the French to keep his kettle website sales going.

## At your service

This massive shift in how we access computing power is driving changes in software too. Think of Google and Facebook. These applications are accessed by us, but they do not reside on 'our' computers. Rather, we get this software as a service. And today, more and more companies, CleanLink amongst them are able to provide their software in this way.

So, I hope that I've answered your question, and given you a new perspective on what cloud computing is all about.

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