

Foreword

There are about a million really bad cloud metaphors. I could tell you how this book helps you “see through the haze” surrounding cloud computing. I could also tell you how it “lifts the fog” from understanding IaaS, PaaS, and all the other cloud acronyms. Finally, I could tell you how it can make your life sunnier by showing you how IBM’s cloud computing products can help you become better at deploying and managing software in both private and public clouds. But I wouldn’t dare insult your intelligence by starting with any of those overwrought comparisons.

Instead, how about I state simply what you’ll gain from reading this book. You’ll gain an understanding of IBM’s unique approach to cloud computing. IBM’s approach differs from that of many of what you may consider the “born-on-the-cloud” companies, such as Amazon and Google, in that it first considers the special needs and concerns of enterprise developers. For instance, it may be well and good if you write an athletic event application using Node.js and a NoSQL database that may not always show registrations at the very second that they are submitted due to queries done on other nodes and the ramifications of the CAP theorem. However, inconsistency of that sort would be absolutely fatal in a core banking application. Likewise, the development and DevOps approaches that work for a team that can all share a single pizza will not necessarily work in a globally distributed, hundred-developer team that is building critical policy-management software for a heavily regulated health insurer.

What Ashok and his team of technical editors have managed to do successfully is to explain how IBM’s unique viewpoint—one that adopts cloud terminology and open cloud technologies while remaining cognizant of its enterprise development heritage—has influenced the development of our cloud products. You’ll see how we introduced the notion of patterns of expertise to help enterprise developers migrate their large-scale applications built on enterprise-ready middleware into cloud computing approaches. You’ll see how IBM Bluemix provides a PaaS built on open standards that still addresses the needs of the enterprise—for security, for scalability and reliability, and for access to on-premises enterprise IT systems. You’ll understand how to use new container approaches, such as Docker. And you’ll also gain an understanding of how offerings such as SoftLayer help you make the best choice for your cloud; be it a public, private, or semi-private cloud in either a virtualized or bare-metal model.

The key is deciding what's right for your particular requirements and not being locked into a single model that a vendor has decided is right for every case. IBM's approach is more that you need freedom to choose from different options, rather than being forced into a one-size-fits-all approach.

So turn the page, sit back, and enjoy the ride. I certainly did, and I'm sure you will too.

Kyle Brown
IBM Distinguished Engineer