

## The CIO and EDI

We have been commenting several times about "who owns EDI", but irrespective of the outcome, the CIO has a role in the software/hardware end of EDI. In the near future, the EDI scenario starts to get more interesting with the development of cloud technology.

Overseeing an EDI department used to be simple. Buy software, negotiate a VAN connection. The hiring of a manager and setting up an EDI department could be under the CIO or not, but the technical implementation was clearly in the realm of the CIO.

Partner hookups and standards conventions were really business issues; but if the department was under the CIO, they were budget issues.

An increasing number of CIOs are dabbling in cloud computing, drawn by promises of its scalability, affordability and more powerful computing ability.

WOW! Cannot believe how a CIO is bombarded on a daily basis with new ideas for clouds! In one day, I received: "Cloud Infrastructure Is yours fully leveraged?"; "Integrity in the Cloud: Can you trust your cloud provider?"; "Cloud Forecast 2015 Leading CIOs share their strategies."; "Know Your Cloud Rights Gartner's guide for enterprise decision-makers." AND think about it: EDI is about at the top of applications that benefit from the cloud!

According to SearchCloudComputing.com, *private cloud* (also called *internal cloud* or *corporate cloud*) is a marketing term for a proprietary computing architecture that provides hosted services to a limited number of people behind a firewall.

In the not-too-distant past, mainframes hosted applications and billed "time-sharing" customers based on use. It was a sensible way to manage the high costs of computing resources before miniaturization, commoditization and competition drove PC prices down and enterprises could bring applications in-house and send employees out with laptops. Now the private cloud is seen as an attempt to regain control of a distributed computing environment, with some of the benefits of the public cloud but fewer of the public cloud's risks.

And if the CIO ignores, somebody will get wise and go around him/her: Who wants to wait two weeks for 10 signatures when they need IT equipment now or have a great idea for a business service? No one. That's why business units are moving past their IT department to cloud computing services, and causing CIOs consternation in the process. The solution to this problem is another C word: change.

Many say clouds are risky. Many say clouds are safe. But lets look at reliability (a key term in supporting an EDI endeavor). The cloud has more possibilities for backup than the traditional corporate data center.

The cloud currently has 10,000 providers of one sort or another, according Gartner. The rise of cloud brokers is anticipated as the new systems integrators, helping with data integration among enterprises' back-end systems and cloud services. Think I will stop being a VAN broker and become a cloud broker!

How serious is the Obama administration about cloud computing? Federal CIO Vivek Kundra has assigned the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) the task of "accelerating" the government's secure adoption of cloud computing. NIST is being called on to lead "efforts to develop standards and guidelines in close consultation and collaboration with standards bodies, the private sector and other stakeholders." This comes two weeks after the White House formalized its National Strategy for Trusted Identities in Cyberspace.

China runs the sun, will it rule the cloud too? Vietnam, a "best-kept secret" just a few years ago, for example, is now a player, attractive for its English language skills and cultural affinity to the United States.