Notes from workshop 09th March 2012 on Nordic cloud computing in Island

Iceland

The workshop in Iceland clearly showed, that there is a need for knowledge sharing within the Nordic countries on the subject of cloud computing. Iceland does not have a lot of experience with cloud computing. They have not seen any large scale projects within the public sector yet, and are therefore interested in learning about experiences of the other Nordic countries on how to reap the benefits on cloud computing.

Apart from the importance of knowledge sharing, the Icelandic participants of the workshop regarded regulation as a very big barrier to cloud computing that needed to be addressed. But also procurement processes and the attracting of data centres were important issues. Especially in terms of attracting data centres, Iceland has some advantages in low cost green energy and good infrastructure towards both USA and Europe. Some of the participants did not find that a Nordic cooperation should focus on standardization as it was addressed in other forums mainly on EU level.

1. Knowledge sharing

Knowledge sharing was in general thought of as a very important factor in all aspects of cloud computing. It is the foundation for all recommendations, but establishing a foundation for knowledge sharing is needed. It was suggested that workshops and conferences could be used as practical means to share e.g. best practices.

2. Regulation

Data protection is deemed the prime barrier to cloud computing. However, regulation is not only about data protection. It is also about how and for what data is being used. Is it possible for a public authority to ensure that data is not being misused?

Questions of privacy are also relevant in regards to terms of use. What can they use data for and what can we demand from the vendors?

In terms of security from a regulatory perspective, what is the sufficient level?

3. Standardisation

Standardisation is a complicated area, which should be solved on an international, European level. The question of standardisation should not be a priority for the Nordic cooperation. Instead standardisation should be dealt with elsewhere on a European level.

4. Procurement processes

Procurement processes are based on EU directives. Cooperation in relation to procurement is useful and profitable. It gives a lot of certainty and is essential to Nordic cooperation. The State Centre in Iceland would appreciate to be incorporated more and be given more influence.

5. Attracting data centres

A clear advantage to attracting more data centres is the focus on green energy, which Iceland has a lot of. It would be beneficial for the Nordic cooperation to focus on having an apparent regulatory setup, perceptible laws, openness and transparency, as well as a stabile democracy.

Finland and Sweden have provided state subsidies indicating that we are keen on attracting data centres.

A plan for how locale companies can benefit from domestic data centres is needed. Locale companies have to be able to use it to their advantage.

We have a good infrastructure in the North. Global warming has enabled fibre cable north Russia between Iceland and Asia. Thereby Iceland has become a branch point between Asia, Europe and USA. Network is a keystone.

A challenge in terms of attracting data centres is lack of technical skills.

Further suggestions

Government institutions could make there own clouds, their own clusters. Thereby we could benefit from each others' resources by using each others' excess capacity. Such cooperation is already seen in research institutions working together to share resources.