Cloudopting

Results in Brief

Creating a cloud-based services marketplace

An innovative new "plug in" platform can help public administrations efficiently manage their services and access a range of cloud-based applications. By doing so, it promises to revolutionise public procurement and save municipalities money.

DIGITAL ECONOMY

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Integrated cloud-based applications enable public services to seamlessly manage assets – such as transportation and waste management – and make efficient use of sensory data generated by citizens. However, implementation across Europe has been mixed, due largely to tight budgets and limited access to such services.

'Ownership and maintenance of a single platform is expensive for many municipalities, and public sector adoption of cloud-computing services has been slow,' explains Ignacio Soler, coordinator of the EU-funded CLOUDOPTING project and co-founder of Smart Partners in Barcelona, Spain. 'So to address this, we developed a platform that offers administrations access to cloud services on a pay-per-use basis. This has the potential to drastically cut user IT expenditure.'

A catalogue of cloud services

This "plug and play" platform can be easily installed by administrations, and enables them to centrally manage operational data. Most importantly, it gives them access to

a catalogue of applications and services that can be employed in cities and municipalities across Europe.

This has the potential to create an EU-wide marketplace for innovative new applications. A service that has been successfully deployed in one city, for example, can easily be taken up in another if it is in the catalogue. CLOUDOPTING offers public bodies with no cloud deployments at all a readily available bundle of services that can be directly adopted.

'For example, the City of Barcelona (which led the project) can now provide smaller municipalities in the surrounding area with cloud-based services,' explains Ignacio Soler. 'By installing this platform, a marketplace for services has been created that these municipalities – some 900 in total – can access. There is no need to replicate these services across several clouds, which they would not be able to afford to do in any case."

A European marketplace

In a European context, this means that an application used for sensor-controlled street lighting in Barcelona can now be easily replicated in Berlin, or a mobile service allowing citizens to find services and places of interest can be replicated across numerous municipalities. Towards the end of the project, administrators and service providers from all over Europe were invited to three 'Hackathons', where they were able to try out the platform for themselves. Feedback was very positive, says Ignacio Soler.

'From the service provider's point of view, this platform greatly increases their chances of getting their product into the market,' he adds. 'This platform has huge potential to create business opportunities; companies can publish their services in the catalogue and promote them across Europe, even globally. We are currently in conversation with investors in order to turn CLOUDOPTING into a start-up business and hit the market. The end of this project (February 2017) is really the beginning of something.'

Cloud computing adoption is growing at a slower rate in Europe than elsewhere; like in the US, for instance. In order to build up a viable European market place for the public procurement of cloud-based services, Ignacio Soler passionately believes that an EU-wide approach is needed. 'This was a key finding of the CLOUDOPTING project,' he explains.

'Municipalities and local governments work to very strict rules on how they publish and evaluate tenders, and it is crucial that EU-wide procurement rules are put in place that can then be adopted by all EU countries. Concrete policies are needed to

make this a reality. We have the technical ability to make this platform work, but we also need EU-wide procurement rules that will make the market place flourish.'

Keywords

CLOUDOPTING, municipalities, urban, procurement, Soler, Barcelona, sensor, Hackathon

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