Insights
2012

What six key technology trends will shape enterprise organizations in 2012? Avanade invites you to look over the IT horizon with Insights 2012.

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The power of innovation is in the hands of your people

People transform information into innovation—so putting functionality, access, and services into workers' hands is one of the most critical objectives for IT in 2012.

You need to enable their brilliance with the latest tools to collaborate, and let them work anywhere, at anytime—without compromising security or productivity. But will employees sit back and wait for the collaborative tools they desire? Not a chance.

Why use the corporate file share when Dropbox is simpler? Why not use Evernote to keep notes and to-dos synched between desktop, tablet, and smartphone—it's free.

The marketplace is already putting pressure on IT organizations to innovate. Our recent research discovered 1 in 5 employees have used a third-party cloud service despite corporate policy. We see companies reacting through a mix of policy and 'beta' programs for new internal software, and partnerships with trusted SaaS providers.
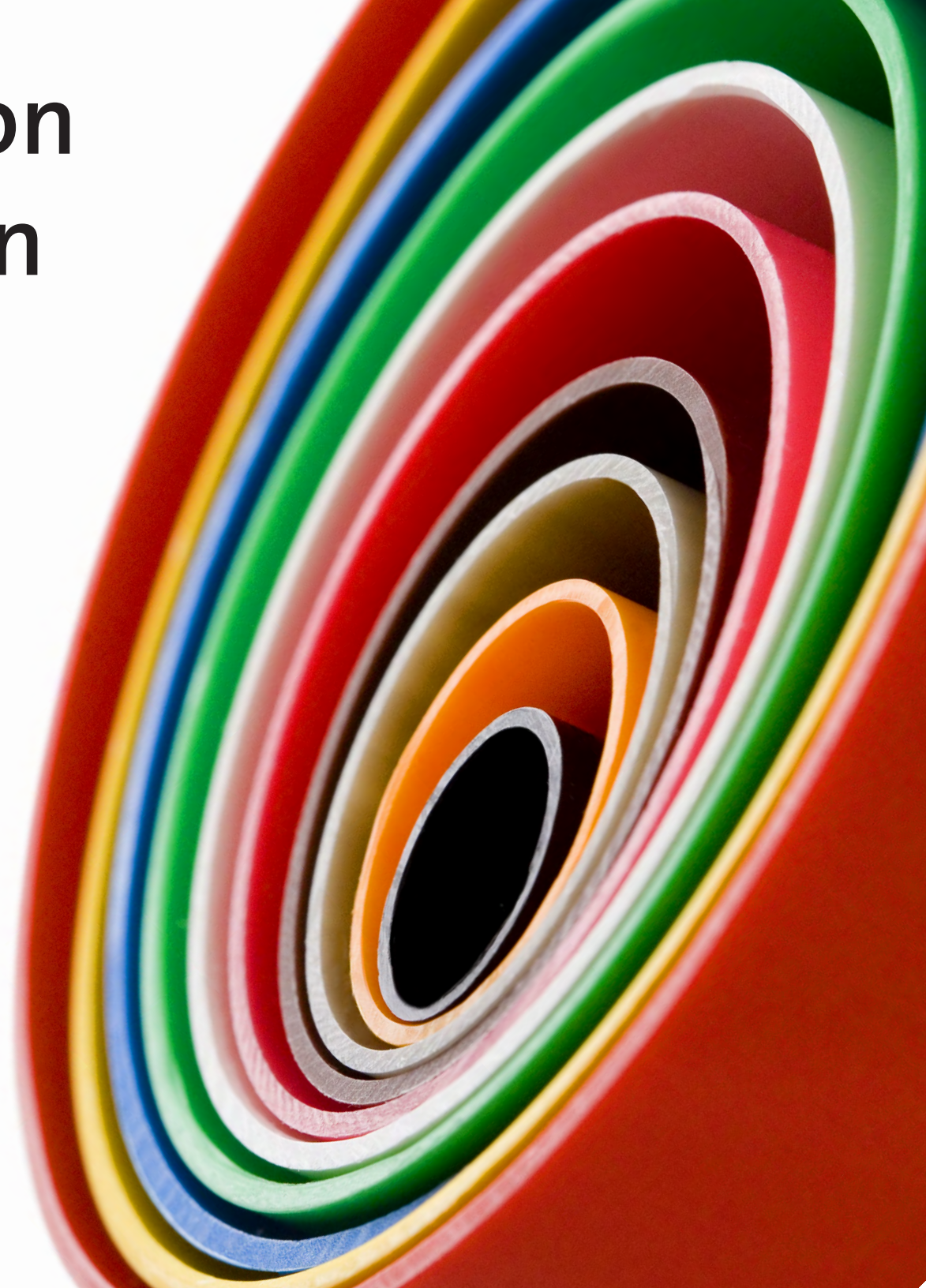
What better way to drive business value than by giving your people the tools they need to quickly develop new, innovative ideas—and work whenever, wherever inspiration strikes. But you have to get a grip on integrating the tools they're choosing with or without you.

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The propagation
of collaboration

From the telegraph to Twitter, waves of techno-
logical innovations have spread increasingly
efficient methods of communication and
collaboration.

For most companies, the last major investment
in collaboration was in the early 2000s—and
technology has significantly expanded since
then. Like it or not, the social phenomenon has
encompassed IT managers. In growing num-
bers, especially amongst Gen X and Y employ-
ees, communication is expected to flow across
chat, text, social, and email in a multimodal and
seamless collaboration experience.

We're finding companies re-investing in
collaboration, making it the focus of efforts to
empower their people with the tools to spread
innovation and grow business value.

Visualized insights expected

When you see things clearly, you make better decisions. But the explosion of big data means that people can't consume it in tables and rows like they used to. It needs context, synthesis, and meaningful expression to let people see and understand the big picture, without getting lost in siloed details.

In 2012, the need for user experience (UX) designers will become more apparent than ever. From designing content architectures, navigation maps, workflows, prototypes, and visual mockups, UX will help make seemingly infinite screens of data more accessible, more understandable, and ultimately more usable.

We already see this in the software we write, and now we'll start to see UX being thoughtfully applied to dashboards, reports, and real-time monitoring solutions. Here's to the power of visibility.

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Device diversity is in full bloom

2012 will bring a rich and diverse ecosystem of new mobile devices that will immediately be connected to Facebook, corporate email, and other collaboration systems. This Christmas Day alone there were 6.8 million new Android smartphones activated—many will end up at the office.

So it's up to IT professionals to groom this garden of employee-owned smart devices and ensure that both connectivity and security concerns are addressed. Gartner expects Microsoft to secure nearly 20 percent of the mobile marketplace via their Nokia partnership, while Google is expected to introduce a tablet to the environment.

The challenge we see is how to effectively align this trend with enterprise objectives, and drive the business forward while embracing a plethora of platforms. Enhanced collaboration and increased productivity are the key beneficial traits that will ensure the survival of this trend in the next year.

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Pluggable infrastructure

So, what are IT organizations looking for in their infrastructure solution? Obviously reduced TCO is desirable. It should simplify IT management with automated provisioning and standardized processes to add, delete, or swap resources without the wait. It must efficiently accommodate growth, new locations, and reorgs. It should streamline deployments as well as bolster end-user support. And, by the way, the CFO wants it to help align IT with the priorities of the business. As companies place ever-increasing reliance on their IT systems, business agility is directly impacted by IT agility. Just racking and stacking ever more servers will lead to more chaos, complexity, and uncontrolled costs. The hardware, software, and repeatable IT processes of pluggable infrastructure are the new nuts and bolts of enterprise business.

That's why we see companies designing receptors for a pluggable infrastructure, which is prewired for operational management. Henry Ford would immediately understand it's a simple solution that provides incredible leverage with replaceable IT parts.

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Cloud comes home to the enterprise

Finally the cloud is an accepted architecture that's delivering value. The rebellious young cloud, full of hope and hype, has matured into a respected professional at home in the world's biggest IT organizations.

In a recent Avanade survey of over 500 global business leaders, 60 percent of companies worldwide said cloud computing is a top IT priority for 2012, with 74 percent of enterprises already using some form of cloud services.

The challenge for IT organizations is how to leverage the benefits while minimizing exposure to the risks.

The increased flexibility, improved efficiency, ease of provisioning, and reduced costs of cloud computing are driving widespread adoption. A majority of companies favor private over public clouds, with more than 70 percent of C-level executives saying they're ready for private clouds.

In part this is due to concerns over security and regulatory issues. Even as private, virtualized datacenters create more and more clouds inside the enterprise, "cloud sprawl" from unmanaged provisioning is becoming a more prevalent problem.

The cloud's newfound maturity is not without growing pains, but the enterprise benefits outweigh the alternative.

Want additional insights?

We believe the Microsoft platform returns the most value when effectively applied to a business problem. Learn how Avanade can help you make 2012 a year of great innovation for your enterprise.

avanade.com/advisor/insights2012

About Avanade

Avanade provides business technology solutions and managed services that connect insight, innovation and expertise in Microsoft® technologies to help customers realize results. Additional information can be found at www.avanade.com.

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