

Businesses Look to Azure Stack to Address Hybrid Cloud Challenges

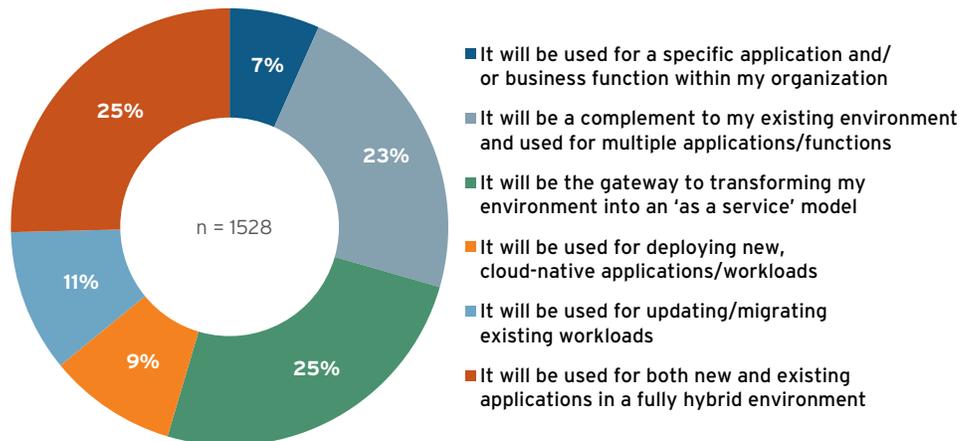
The 451 Take

Enterprise cloud adoption has progressed to the point that businesses of nearly every size and type now include cloud platforms and technologies in their IT playbooks. Responses to a new study conducted by 451 Research and commissioned by NTT Communications in partnership with Dell EMC indicate that the next stage for many businesses is hybrid cloud – IT environments that combine on-premises and external cloud resources to seamlessly deliver business functions. More than 80% of European businesses surveyed (www.goinghybrid.cloud) say they are using multiple cloud environments today. However, only a subset of those organizations have the capability to migrate workloads between cloud environments, and few have seamless levels of interoperability.

The current state of digital transformation has many businesses at the point of transitioning from as-needed use of disconnected cloud technologies and environments to a more unified hybrid execution, capable of driving improvements in flexibility, cost, performance and security. For many organizations, that shift will include big-picture decisions about how they will manage IT estates in the context of hybrid cloud, including choices around core platform technologies that will enable interoperability and simplify execution.

Microsoft's Azure Stack is one such technology, emerging as a cloud platform option at a time when many businesses face these big-picture decisions, and it is likely to be among the key technologies considered. A majority (68%) of European businesses surveyed indicated they have considered, or will consider, Azure Stack as a component of their hybrid cloud plans.

Azure Stack's Impact on Hybrid Cloud Environments



Source: 451 Research

Although Azure Stack is at an early stage of market adoption, survey responses indicate that businesses believe the platform has the potential to be a far-reaching and transformational technology whose impact would be felt across their IT infrastructure. Rather than applying the technology to specific applications or functions, or using it exclusively for new, cloud-native applications, businesses mostly believe Azure Stack will complement existing environments, apply to new and existing workloads in a hybrid environment, and serve as the gateway to transforming existing environments into 'as a service' cloud delivery models.

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Business Impact Brief

Business Impact

HYBRID CLOUD TECHNOLOGIES ARE A GATEWAY FOR TRANSFORMATION.

A significant portion of businesses regard Azure Stack as key to transforming their IT infrastructure. Businesses' existing IT investments, form factors and APIs will play an important role in the choices they make regarding Azure Stack and other hybrid cloud technologies. The platform's technical features – including its ability to support requirements such as edge and disconnected use cases – will also be important factors in these decisions.

HYBRID-ENABLING PLATFORMS WILL BE THE BASIS FOR DEPLOYMENTS.

Technologies that, like Azure Stack, are designed to serve as connective tissue between on-premises environments, hosted infrastructure and public cloud will be the basis for technology decisions. Businesses will have to evaluate new technologies on the basis of whether they are a good fit for the frameworks they have chosen. Integration and interoperability will continue to be a development priority for the platform makers.

HYBRID CLOUD WILL HAVE TO SUPPORT DATA-CENTRIC WORKLOADS.

Expectations for hybrid cloud platforms include the capability to support the workloads businesses have already marked for execution in hybrid cloud environments. Many of the workloads identified by businesses as targeted for deployment on hybrid cloud are data-centric, such as file and content storage, data analytics and business intelligence, database and data warehousing, and the development of applications that will rely on this data.

Looking Ahead

As cloud adoption progresses, more businesses will adopt hybrid strategies and achieve hybrid environments. Hybrid cloud may not be the ultimate end state of IT for all businesses, but what lies beyond hybrid is far enough in the future that most organizations currently identify hybrid cloud as their destination.

Identifying hybrid cloud as the objective is an important step toward accomplishing a hybrid cloud environment, but it is an early step in a process that demands significant organizational and technical changes to complete. Businesses that choose to implement Azure Stack vs. other commercial or open source cloud management platforms will typically do so with the understanding that Microsoft's cloud platform will be the basis for how they accomplish a hybrid IT environment and, therefore, the foundation for many of the other technology decisions they will make along the way.

Going forward, hybrid cloud strategies will enable businesses to improve agility across their IT estate while effectively addressing precise requirements for governance and compliance, cost, and application performance.



Transform. Transcend.



What do enterprises want from hybrid cloud? How are decisions being made about its suitability, and which issues are influencing the extent of its adoption across European businesses? To answer these questions and examine other criteria shaping the way enterprise executives are planning for hybrid cloud deployment – and what this means for the service provider community – read our commissioned report ['Going Hybrid: What Enterprises Want From Cloud Service Providers'](#), based on an independent study of over 1,500 IT decision-makers representative of Europe's largest businesses and key vertical sectors.