

IT cos on overdrive to get business from the clouds

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Patni Computer's new CEO Jeya Kumar feels "cloud computing" is the way to go as it will change the way people use, apply and adopt technology. The company is planning to set up labs in India and the US to generate intellectual property capabilities to develop solutions for firms that wish to access data and applications from the cloud.

Just what is cloud computing? Despite its somewhat esoteric name, it stands for technology that helps an organisation to place its applications and data on the internet, thereby saving on spending on in-house hardware and software applications.

Most people who use web-based email services like Gmail, Yahoo! Mail or Windows Live (Hotmail) or have watched a video online or shared snaps using photo-hosting services like flickr or snapfish or read news online or watch TV shows on the internet may not realise that they are actually using 'cloud computing' services. Most players provide these services for free for individual users. For enterprise users, it's generally a paid subscription-based model — Google Apps being a good example.

While it's been around for a while abroad, Indian IT companies are catching up fast on cloud computing and are betting big on it. Wipro, for instance, has already built a "private cloud" for its internal purposes. The software giant is now offering that expertise to existing customers to optimise the computing power of their data centers. Wipro is also building what it calls the "enterprise cloud" — a capability it plans to offer to clients who have already outsourced or plan to outsource their hosting or infrastructure management activities with the company.