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Open Cloud Foundation: Cloud industry players are called today to join forces to guarantee openness and tackle vendor lock-in issues in the Cloud

Paris, October 17, 2017. A large group of cloud industry stakeholders announce their intent to start the Open Cloud Foundation. This initiative will work to define a meta-framework of standards that aim to guarantee freedom of business choices and avoid lock-in for Cloud businesses.

The Cloud industry drives a pace of innovation and industrialization as never before in history, helping any industry to commoditize their IT services. Soon, almost any layer will be available “as a service”, from infrastructure or services, to platforms, function or cognition layers. A consequence of this massive trend is that many traditional users of IT could rely on more outsourced and industrialized added value services, gaining pace and scalability capabilities.

A lot of those companies' data, algorithms, services and infrastructure are or will be hosted by Cloud providers raising the question of ownership and control of those data, trade secret, and competitive advantages (algorithms). It is key to prevent the inevitable effect of silos. In parallel, Cloud providers are consolidating and Cloud giants are emerging with the power to create closed 'de facto' standards, limiting market liquidity and ease of use. But customers will need to be able to build their strategy based on services developed by several providers at the same time, as well as service interaction with legacy services already deployed in their own on-premise facilities.

In order to ensure a steady growth for any business, it will be key to keep the Cloud open. Allowing customers to switch from one cloud provider to another, enabling access to features in the Cloud stack (IAAS/PAAS/SAAS but also cognition layers), will empower new players to drive innovation on top of already massive traditional Cloud players. Everyone will benefit from an open Cloud.

Regulation may be an answer to these questions, but it is too far from industry, too slow, and the risk of bad regulation is too high, in addition to the risk of diverging regulation around the world.

Therefore, it is crucial that the Cloud industry and other Cloud stakeholders collaborate on the guidelines to enable practical management of this issue, in a framework that could evolve as fast as the technology itself evolves, based as much as possible on existing standards. Missing standards will be identified and the group will work to bridge the gaps where necessary. The application will be worldwide, but will be able to answer to local regulatory process (for example the “Data Portability” in the recently proposed Free Flow of Data Regulation by the European Commission).

The **Open Cloud Foundation** announced today aims to **provide the meta-framework to ensure Cloud**

openness by bringing together providers, customers, research organizations or regulatory bodies. It will **operate an observatory of industry practices** against this framework, and will use every available lever to **help the industry commit** on this topic, together. Each member will support both the overall goals of the Open Cloud Foundation and take part in at least one of the working groups. The Open Cloud Foundation is expected to be formally registered and start its operations in Q1Y18.

The first preparation meeting will be hosted in Paris in December 2017. Remote people will be allowed to join through web conference to ensure broad ability to participate.

Today is a call to other players to join the stakeholders that have already declared their interest regarding this initiative: Acronis, Aruba, Auchan Retail, BCG, CISPE, GoDaddy, ICT4V, Ikoula, INRIA, Intel, ISPCoconnect, i2Coalition, Kamet (Axa), La Poste Colissimo, Linkbynet, NetApp, OpenStack Foundation, Ormuco, OVH, Plesk, SolidHost, Sourcia, UKCloud...

Quotes of organizations representatives.

“Openness is a core value for OVH, it is a design principle for every product and solution we offer. We strongly believe that the Open Cloud Foundation will reinforce the Cloud market innovation and the freedom for our clients.” — Laurent Allard, Vice-Chairman of the Board, OVH

“Intel welcomes an industry initiative to ensure clouds remain open and interoperable, as well as deliver clarity to cloud users around data protection rules. With Open Cloud Foundation’s commitment to open standards, it will facilitate enterprises and consumers to fully leverage the potential of multi-cloud to meet their workload requirements, and helps to attract more cloud innovations from ecosystem players, stimulating healthy growth of the entire cloud industry.” — Raejeanne Skillern, Vice President of Intel's Data Center Group and General Manager of the Cloud Service Provider Business

“Being in control of your data is a valid concern of all cloud users. Acronis addresses the issue head on with its unique hybrid cloud architecture, which gives users full control of where to store their data and easy tools to migrate it to and from the cloud. We support the Open Cloud Foundation initiative which is in line with our company's philosophy to provide full data management flexibility to our partners and customers.” — John Zanni, President, Acronis

“The key to providing our customers the maximum level of data protection, security and satisfaction is strictly related to having shared standards that can be applied, used and understood by everyone. We will continue to work on the openness of the cloud ecosystem breaking down both technological and bureaucratic barriers.” — Stefano Cecconi, CEO, Aruba S.p.A.

“The pace of transformation of companies is incredibly high and cloud is a strong enabler to transform business and IT. But keeping cloud technologies as a transformation enabler requires to maintain it open, reliable, secured and reversible.” — Benoit Fremaux, Corporate CIO, Auchan Retail

“BCG is convinced that cloud is the way to go.” — Norbert Faure, Managing Director, The Boston Consulting Group (BCG)

“CISPE already started to work on ways to enable switching of cloud providers in the Cloud Infrastructure level. Reinforcing that approach with other the layers on the top of it, will ensure trust long term growth in the Cloud market. We will also be vigilant regarding security and data protection topics.” — Alban Schmutz, Chairman, CISPE (Cloud Infrastructure Services Providers in Europe)

“Through the Open Cloud Foundation, our ecosystem will take an holistic approach for the first time regarding openness for us and our customers.” — Patrick Pulvermüller, SVP, Head of GoDaddy EMEA

“The enormous potential for value creation provided by paradigms such as Cloud, Smart Data and the Internet of Things will be only partially realized if properties such as reversibility, portability and interoperability, as well as the possibility for users to make choices in terms of location policies and data protection, are not provided by the cloud market.” — Prof.Dr.Ing. Daniel Kofman, CEO, ICT4V

“We are dedicated to guarantee reversibility and interoperability to our customers. We expect the output of the Open Cloud Foundation to expand the ecosystem of the cloud.” — Jules-Henri Gavetti, CEO, Ikoula

“ISPCConnect was already working on the same topic and in the same direction in The Netherlands. Building a worldwide industry-led initiative with providers, CIOs and all other stakeholders is the right approach to solve this Cloud openness question for the future” — Simon Besteman, CEO, ISPCConnect

“Inria's researchers have been working for years to enhance the capabilities of large scale distributed infrastructures, and support the evolution of cloud computing. Being part of this international, industry-led, initiative to answer Cloud customers expectations is an exciting opportunity for the dissemination and impact of our research.” — Antoine Petit, CEO, INRIA

"Infrastructure Cloud players needs to have a common playing field worldwide. The Open Cloud Foundation will help to avoid regulatory risks for the business of cloud providers." — David Snead, Policy Working Group Chair, i2coalition.

"NetApp has always pushed for an open approach, the essence of its Data Fabric strategy. We daily invest in a massive technological adoption for an open cloud, this naturally leads us to join and participate in the Open Cloud Foundation alongside with our key partners " — Marc Montiel Vice-President Southern Europe at NetApp

"Open standards drive innovation, interoperability and integration. These are core to the mission of the OpenStack community, and cross-community collaboration is key to making this a reality for users. We're looking forward to engaging with the Open Cloud Foundation as it forms and develops its program of work in the year ahead." — Mark Collier, COO, OpenStack Foundation

"Ormuco believes in open source and open standards to drive interoperability and greater value for our customers. Users need to move workloads to the infrastructures and locations that make the most sense from a business standpoint. Our participation in the Open Cloud Foundation is another way Ormuco will participate in the conversation that leads to open interoperability." — Orlando Bayter, President, Ormuco

“At SolidHost, one of our mottos is: if we ever feel a need to lock our clients in, we're doing something entirely wrong. We have a strong long-term vision, and we want our clients to stay with us, but we strive to do so by proving our value, rather than by trying to make it hard for a client to leave. If all cloud providers were to adopt this paradigm, it will naturally stimulate and promote the quality of the online ecosystem as a whole.” — André van Vliet, CEO, SolidHost

“Keeping the cloud open will be fundamental to the long term health of the EU and UK economies, driving innovation, competition and growth” — Nicky Stewart, Commercial Director, UKCloud

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