

Live Performance of Cloud Brokers in a Federation

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Abstract: *Cloud Brokering is an emerging service in the cloud computing model. This is more evident in a federated cloud structure. A cloud broker is an entity (real or virtual) that manages the use, performance and delivery of cloud services, in addition to enabling the negotiations and relationships between cloud providers and cloud consumers. The definition is a simple one in concept, but as the cloud computing model evolves and matures, it is becoming increasingly evident that unlike other actors in the NIST definitions, the complexity involved in the efficient implementation of autonomic cloud brokering is an open challenge. While several studies are available in literature using simulations to derive results on experiments using the cloud infrastructure, the real life scenarios where cloud based services are derived and utilized are different and varied, involving several intangible variables that cannot be emulated in a simulator. This study describes a real life scenario of a cloud broker implementation under a federated cloud infrastructure. The paper analyzes different use case scenarios which can exist while a cloud broker provisions x-as-a-service. Different, real time load conditions are generated and emulated in a live use case on the author's private cloud and cloud bursting is directed towards the Amazon Web Services (AWS) cloud infrastructure. The test bed is a hybrid cloud with customized reporting. The study also highlights real world issues plaguing the cloud brokerage framework and indicates ways to mitigate the same using the federated cloud infrastructure combining the public cloud and a private cloud while viewing the problem from the perspective of a cloud broker.*

Keywords: Cloud Broker, Federation in Clouds, Cloud Brokerage.

1. Introduction

Cloud computing is alive and kicking. This is despite naysayers and initial dooms day predictions professing to the contrary. It's a concept that has become the toast of conferences and meetings in the Information Technology domains today and we find increasing evidence of its utility and adoption in the industry as well as the academia. The fog of hesitance shrouding its acceptance, by the academia in particular, fades. The framework for the cloud is maturing and as it matures and its acceptance increases, there is also a need to review use cases that evolve along with its acceptance. The NIST model [1] proposes a framework which has become increasingly accepted in academia and the authors would be using the same for presenting this study and discussing an ignored player in the NIST model – the cloud broker.

Prior to appreciating the increasingly evident requirement of the cloud broker, it is essential to appreciate the salient differences between the framework for cloud computing with its earlier avatar's – the Distributed and the Grid Computing Frameworks. While the distributed and grid computing frameworks were more of technological and hardware oriented solutions, cloud computing is more about making sure that the right service, whether in hardware, software or in some other form is delivered to its intended user in a time bound and efficient manner[2]. Although the genesis of the cloud computing era can, to some extent, be attributed to the Grid computing standards, the present day cloud computing scenario is a far cry from what existed when the Grid was being conceptualized. The amount of attention and ink, in print and on the web, indicate the positioning of the cloud concepts at a cusp for the development of this framework. As more and more organizations start to contribute towards the utilization of the cloud computing framework, more elaborate use cases and thus taxonomies are emerging.

Various standard governing bodies have defined the *cloud* in differing manners and evolved taxonomies that reflect their definitions. The one that have found acceptance in both academia and the industry are from NIST and Gartner. In addition, the efforts from organizations like IEEE and associated open platform groups, backed by industry leaders like Intel and Microsoft have gone ahead and defined their own versions of taxonomies related to the cloud computing environment. Most have however converged on the basic structure of 5 key players, three services and four deployment models. While this segmentation of players, service models and deployment models have found acceptance in most quarters, differing use cases have since emerged which have brought to fore new ways to look at the interaction between players and how we defined or conceptualized their existence. As the model develops from a single player scenario for cloud provisioning to the existence of multiple cloud offerings, the concept of Intercloud [3] and Cloud interoperability requirements have driven the need for a player that takes up the role of managing the differing services in an automated and efficient manner. It is here that the most controversial, least understood, and increasingly debated player in the cloud computing model comes to fore – the cloud broker.

During the initial stages of acceptance of the cloud model, the attention was primarily on the role of the cloud service provider and the cloud service consumer. However, since 2013, as the cloud model matured, increasing attention was seen on the role of a broker as a harbinger of more efficient services and intermediation of services on offer from multiple cloud service providers. In the industry, there was increasing evidence of erstwhile cloud service carriers and cloud service providers morphing into a role of the cloud broker or in some cases completely transforming into cloud brokers and leaving the role of a cloud provider. The concept of a broker acting only as a mediator between the consumer and the provider is also being replaced by the cloud broker adopting a more expansive role – that of the *Prosumer*. This paper reviews some of the latest use cases a typical cloud

broker is adopting today in an increasingly exciting phase of the cloud computing evolution. The authors have made an attempt to compare and analyze the leaders in the cloud broker provisioning frameworks and platforms, and have paid special attention to the open source work, that were available for implementation and comparison.

The rest of the paper is structured as under: In section 2, the State of Art on current taxonomies used in describing the cloud broker is discussed. Section 3 discusses the role of federation in the cloud and its implications for the cloud ecosystem as pertains to the cloud broker. Section 4 specifically discusses the role and performance of the proposed broker in a federated cloud. Section 5 concludes the research.

2. State of Art

Though Cloud computing is a highly studied topic today and a large body of research has gone into studying specific standards of interoperability amongst clouds and how they are to be achieved, the aspects of brokering services to the end client from amongst those available is finding refereed status only recently [4]. Most literature authorities and reviewed author papers have converged on the definition of a cloud broker using the NIST definition which generically defines a cloud broker as an entity that manages the use, performance and delivery of cloud services and negotiates relationships between cloud providers and cloud consumers. This has made it akin to a *Prosumer*. Voids in the definition and implementation of autonomic services by a cloud broker are evident in most definitions and have been highlighted by several authors in the recent past. These challenges are necessitating a relook at the accepted definitions.

Existing work in literature primarily stress on using SLAs to guarantee consumer of cloud services a level of performance, that is defined by abstract metrics, directly from the cloud service providers to the end client or cloud consumers [5], [6], [7]. There is an apparent void in research on SLA formulation strategies between the cloud service broker and the cloud consumer and between the cloud service broker and the cloud service provider. This void prevents an effective cloud broker implementation for hybrid clouds and Interclouds scenarios. The architecture of the cloud, whether public, private, community or hybrid, would make it non trivial to propose and implement a framework for creating of binding frameworks in the absence of accurate measuring and monitoring mechanisms for provision of services. This is especially true for a use case when the broker is aggregating and arbitrating services from multiple cloud service providers and packaging them as a service bundle for the end client. Several works exist in literature which have attempted to arrive at universal cloud interaction mechanisms that make disparate clouds seamless and their interaction more efficient. [8], [9] highlight SLA formulation, but does not address the aspects of the cloud broker's role of arbitrating services. Alhamad in [5], [7] discusses the aspect of SLA and performance measurement in his recent findings but does not address the issue in the perspective of how a broker would become a party to the SLA agreement between the end user

or the cloud consumer and the cloud service provider. [12], [14] are legal perspectives on the aspect of SLA provisioning in the European Union and how the rules on jurisdiction provided by the Regulation 44/2001 where two general distinctions are drawn in order to determine which (European) courts are competent to adjudicate disputes arising out of a SLA. The former is between Business to Business and Business to Consumer transactions, and the latter is in regard to contracts which provide a jurisdiction clause and contracts which do not.

In [14] a framework for broker assigned SLA management service with a novel high level abstraction model has been recommended. In this work the architectural design of a system named Cloud Agency aims to respond to the need for Resources management and to offer added value to the existing Cloud services. This system is depicted to be in charge of brokering the collection of cloud resources from different providers that fulfills requirements of user's applications as a best effort service. The user is able to delegate to the Agency the necessary checks of the agreement fulfillment, the monitoring of resource utilization and eventually necessary re-negotiations. In [15] the authors propose a broker framework where SLA enabled broker evaluate the number of resources available in the environment and the number of policies per resource that need to be implemented. The results indicate that the inclusion of SLA affects the resource selection behavior of the broker. It is however silent on the methods to control the affect using an SLA. It does however indicate that the overall performance of the system improves in terms of job throughput with an extra overhead in request processing due to the presence of a broker. These results are shown on a grid sharing environment and major differences exist in the business model used for the grid service provisioning and cloud service provisioning model. Work by Buyya et al. in [11] is another novel work on the subject where the concept of Federations in the cloud has been introduced and its implications on the way cloud brokers perform has been highlighted. Extension to this work was produced in [13] by Khanna et al in 2014 where experiments were conducted in a live environment with a centralized broker.

All these works converge on the point that there is increasing complexity in designing an autonomic brokering service which can seamlessly interact across a multitude of cloud standards, networking standards and also mobile computing standards. The deductions are that *federation of cloud* and *interoperability* – interaction and message passing; in a cloud environment; will be necessitated by employing standard interfaces that can understand multiple languages and paradigms or are interconnecting private clouds to public ones using networking paradigms.

There are numerous benefits of an interconnected and federated cloud environment. These are evident for both the cloud providers and the cloud users. They can greatly assist in avoiding vendor lock-in, permit scalability, higher availability, low access latency, and a more energy efficient solution. Recent work by Toosi et al in [10] highlights the same in great detail. Several recent works by the CLOUDS Labs, Melbourne and the work by the IEEE Workgroup

P2301 and P2302 on Standards for Intercloud Interoperability and Federation have focused on the way the clouds can interoperate and standards defined. The present research was undertaken to understand and implement such a use case scenario where the standard interfaces, or, the cloud brokers were defined between the private network and the public one. The efficacy of the implementation was observed and it was seen that through some amount of fine tuning, an autonomic broker is a reality.

3. Federation in the Cloud

Federation in the cloud is achieved when a set of cloud providers voluntarily interconnect their infrastructures in order to allow sharing of resources among each other. The federation partnership in clouds leads to the establishment process which can be schematized according to the following three main phases:

- **Discovery:** The cloud looks for other available clouds for federation.
- **Match-making:** The cloud selects between the discovered clouds the ones that fit as much as possible its requirements.
- **Authentication:** The cloud establishes a trust context with the selected clouds.

When the federation in the cloud is established, a new phase becomes very relevant, that is, the “management” of the federated resources. Federation brings to fore new use cases to the cloud computing paradigm. In fact besides, the traditional scenario where cloud providers offer cloud-based services to their clients, federation triggers a new paradigm where cloud providers can buy and/or sell computing/storage capabilities and services to other clouds. For example, a cloud might need to procure resources from other clouds in the following manner:

- **Storage Space** - The cloud runs out of its storage/computing resources. In order to continue providing cloud-based service to its clients, it decides to procure resources from other clouds.
- **Distributed Availability** - The cloud needs to deploy a distributed cloud-based service in different geographical locations; hence, it acquires resources placed in those target locations.
- **Migration and Stability** - The cloud need to migrate cloud-based service instances in other clouds in order to accomplish service relocation, power saving, backup, etc. At the same time, a cloud can decide to provide resources to other clouds when it realizes that its datacenter is under-utilized at given times. Typically, datacenters are under-utilized during the night and over-utilized during the morning. Therefore, as the datacenter cannot be turned off, the cloud provider may decide to turn the problem into a business opportunity. This case may be applied to many different organizations, such as, universities, public administrations and enterprises.

4. Use Cases for Cloud Brokers Using Federated Clouds

The authors have conducted several simulations and real world scenarios implementation on the Greencloud 2.0 and the AWS cloud in the past for testing and simulating multiple cloud based request provisioning scenarios [13, 20, 21]. This has been done using multiple concurrent user requests and a Broker attempting to enable the seamless availability of services in the cloud. This research is based on live experiments made by the author on a federated cloud environment with multiple data centers talking to each other, either centrally or through a third party utility/cloud broker.

The authors in this paper have focused the research on cloud brokerage as the *discovery and matchmaking phase* needed for the creation of a federation of clouds. We envisage four possible federation schemas in which this cloud brokerage may take place. These are:

- Composite Schema
- Hierarchical Schema
- Distributed Schema
- Hybrid or Mixed Schema

While there are numerous use cases which can be extrapolated using the four schemas, for the present research, the authors have studied the Composite and Distributed Schemas and conducted actual experiments based on the scenarios provided below. It is pertinent to mention, that earlier work by the authors in the same field were on the implementation of the broker in the AWS cloud [20, 21].

4.1 Use Case I – Composite Federated Schema

The Composite Federated Schema is for a use case where a single broker, common to all clouds, is in charge of establishing the federation. Such schemas are often visible in private clouds which are disparate and distributed across geographical locations. The schema was extensively tested across the private network of the authors and the figure 1 illustrates the physical disposition of the data centers in India housing the servers. The authors implemented a private network to create a distributed engine based on the Drupal 7 platform which was used to create an application capable of hosting multiple service scenarios. The centralized broker was housed at the local facility of Jaipur, India and multiple request scenarios were generated and pushed through the broker. The analysis engine for recording the results was New Relic [22] and a customized version of the Drupal version 7 framework was used to create the central loading and testing utility. The PHP library SimpleCloud was used to implement the Cloud paradigm on the Drupal Interface.

In the case of the Composite Federated Schema, data centers at Jaipur, Delhi, Lucknow and Indore were used to create the cloud infrastructure. The data center at Kolkata, India was used as a limb to test certain externalities. The base tests were around the adoption and creation of new VMs across the server stacks and the usage of additional memory beyond the baseline memory usage available for standard servers.

Different use case scenarios depicted in the tables below indicate the different conditions and load tests generated.

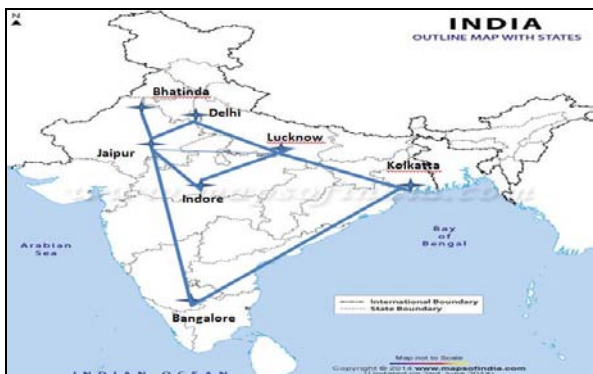


Figure 1: Location of the Data Center Servers within the Author's Country and Private Cloud

Extensive test cases were created and the load conditions were generated to test the cloud provisioning. The test case scenario for the Composite Schema load tests under live traffic conditions was as under in Table 1:-

Table 1: Load testing on the private cloud of the authors using the Composite Federated Schema

Scenario	Load Test Requests	Servers in Use	Time Duration	Type of Requests
Scenario 1	100 Searches	5 Concurrent Servers at Three Locations	60 - 400 secs	Singular Jobs
Scenario 2	60 Searches on the Server + 40 across servers	5 Concurrent Servers at Two locations	60 - 400 secs	Batch Jobs
Scenario 3	50 + 50 Search and Swaps on the Server	4 Concurrent Servers at Three Locations	60- 400 secs	Periodical Jobs (50% singular mixed)

The test results for the load generated for the Scenario depicted above using the data centers that are geographically distributed, as shown in figure 1 and having a similar hardware configuration. The tests cases illustrated in Table 1 were conducted across a seven day period and to normalize the results, 10 separate sets of similar experiments were conducted for each use case to eliminate network latency issues and to ensure that latency errors were reduced to a minimum. Three types of jobs, singular, batch, and periodical jobs were sent to the cloud broker through the network and the response of the broker was analyzed against in terms of successful job execution. The results of the test are depicted in Table 2.

Table 2: Load test results for Composite Federated Schema using multiple request scenarios

Scenario	Servers	Function	Test Duration	Request per Sec	Request Time	CPU Load
Scenario 1	5	Search	377 Sec	0.27	3.7	10%
Scenario 2	5	Search	141 Sec	0.71	1.4	13%
Scenario 3	5	Search + Swap	125 Sec	0.79	1.2	18%

The CPU and memory load using the customized cloud Broker in the two main scenarios were as depicted in the graphs below. It is pertinent to note that the load conditions on the servers were severe but the resultant distribution and accomplishment of the requests was Very High when the composite scenario was used with the proposed broker located at Jaipur. In the scenarios depicted, the broker used initially was a linear model cloud broker which acted in a centralized fashion and used a simple FIFO queue to push the cloud request to the cloud stack. However, an improved version of the same broker using a semi-recommender system to remember the cloud stack usage in previous requests and utilizing the knowledge to provide better services for future request in the second scenario to a much better result.

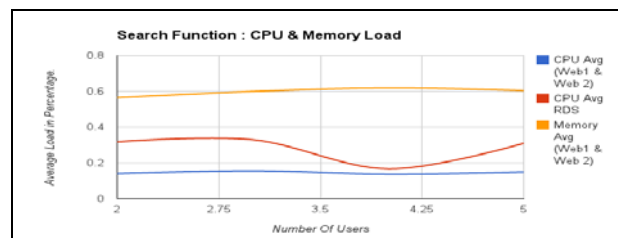


Figure 2: The CPU load condition in composite federated schema

The load condition for a combination of searches and swaps on a distributed engine that allows clients to search for properties and home exchanges (a multiple, mixed load) shows improved results even when the loading factor is high. The load (higher number of users per second) is a direct reflection on the load generator capability and simulates the efficacy of the cloud broker. This observation is further asserted in the next figure which shows an even better performance of the Broker under severe load conditions, across geographically disparate locations and variable conditions of request arrival. A predictive load analyzing engine was adopted in the broker configuration to improve the efficiency of the system and increase the number of accepted requests.

4.2 Use Case II – Distributed Federated Schema

In the Distributed Federated Schema tested by the authors, the broker is acting as medium to integrate the services which are available across distributed servers/data centers which do not necessarily talk to each other. The broker would be required to implement suitable mechanisms to make the service providers talk to each other and often acts as a third party to implement the resource request. There is a use case here for a broker to act as an intermediary and an aggregate or of multiple existing or new resources. The schema was implemented across Jaipur, Indore, Kolkata, Bangalore (CAIR) and Bhatinda in the present research. The data centers across the locations were given a base line install and the traffic requests were routed through the broker available at Jaipur and Kolkata. The brokers available for the test were using a serial logic to implement the request. The use of a recommender system developed by the authors (in research) was used to optimize the request provisioning. The General Meta-Broker Service, as described by [23], was utilized for describing the requested service and as far as concerned, the

provisioning of the service was transparent to the client utilizing the service.

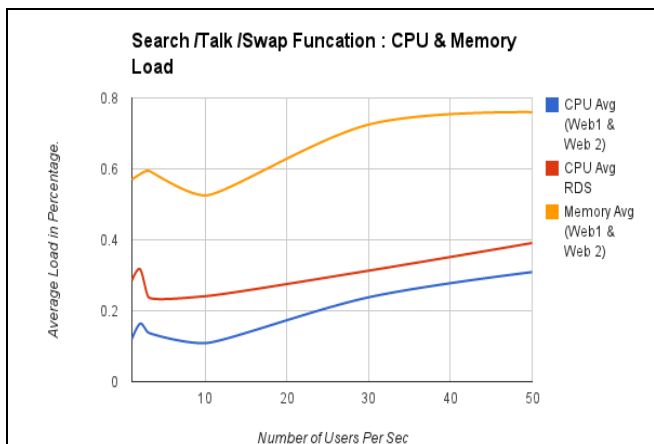


Figure 3: The load conditions in Scenario 2 (Search plus Swap) for Composite federated Broker

The test case scenarios for the Distributed Federated Schema load tests, given in Table 1, under live traffic conditions were similar to the Composite one. The metrics for obtaining the results were however dependent upon the response time a request took to be completed. The number of request which were not delivered as a result of over loading was also a metric which was checked again default conditions and against the special case of implementation of the broker.

Table 3: Results of Distributed Federated Schema results

No of clients per Sec	CPU Avg (Web1 & Web 2)	CPU Avg RDS	Memory Avg (Web1 & Web 2)
2	14.05%	31.80%	57%
3	15.60%	33.00%	60%
4	13.75%	16.70%	62%
5	14.95%	31.00%	61%

Similarly, the results of the distributed federated schema when multiple on the CPU load when multiple clients were accessing the services of the data centers are in Table 4. RDS indicates the Relational Database Server (MySQL) server instance used for provisioning of the web service.

Table 4: Federated Schema using multiple clients at Jaipur

No of clients per Sec	CPU Avg (Web1 & Web 2)	CPU Avg RDS	Memory Avg (Web1 & Web 2)
1	12.05%	28.50%	57%
2	16.35%	31.70%	59%
3	13.85%	23.90%	60%
10	10.87%	24.10%	53%
30	23.80%	31.30%	73%
50	30.90%	39.10%	76%

The time for search of a resource (the response time) and eventual provisioning of the resource when requested for by multiple clients in a Distributed federated Schema is presented in figure 4 below. The results indicate that the proposed broker is scalable and its impact does not deteriorate with the increase in the number of simultaneous clients requesting access to the same resource across multiple data centers.

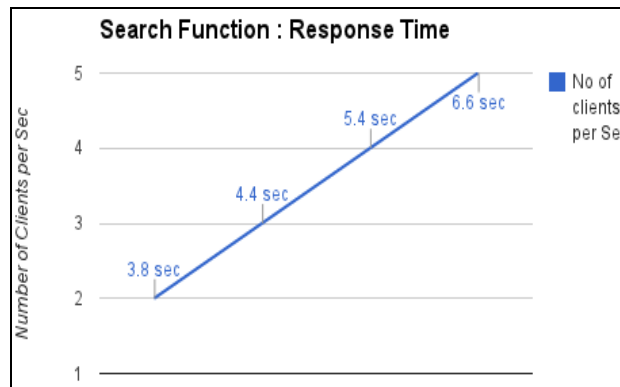


Figure 4: Response time of the broker for search and provisioning of web services in the Distributed Federated Scenario

5. Conclusion

The research is a step by the authors towards the actual implementation of a cloud broker in a multitude of scenarios using a Federated Cloud Schema. The tests conducted during the course of this research were aimed at reviewing the customized cloud broker schema created by the authors against the one available in the open domain. The authors have studied two salient use cases in the Federated Schema for Cloud provisioning, i.e. Composite and Distributed Schema, and would undertake another study to analyze the performance of the cloud broker in the other two in subsequent research.

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Author Profile



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