EU BonFIRE Initiative Opens Access to Sophisticated Cloud Testing Environment

Submitted by: Breakaway Communications
Tuesday, 30 October 2012

Helping European researchers and SMEs develop cloud applications by providing an ideal platform for cloud experiments; reduces risk and capital investment

LONDON, UK, October 30th 2012 – The EU-initiative, BonFIRE (http://www.bonfire-project.eu), announced today that it is opening its multi-site cloud infrastructure to researchers from industry and academia and SMEs from November 1st 2012, for testing and experimentation of cloud-based applications and services. The infrastructure will be available on a free-to-use basis for the next 12 months; requests for access will be evaluated in a simple application process.

The EU launched BonFIRE in 2010 to help drive excellence in European services research by building a cloud environment to perform testing and experimentation. Because BonFIRE operates across six European cloud sites, with controlled networking between some of the sites, academics and businesses can test a range of cloud scenarios such as cloud bursting and hybrid clouds.

Targeted at developers in the pre-production testing phase, as well as organisations undertaking collaborative research, BonFIRE provides access to large-scale virtualised compute, storage, and networking resources, with unprecedented levels of control and observation for detailed experimentation.

BonFIRE allows users to evaluate the effects of converged service and network infrastructures; assess the socio-economic impact of new cloud services; and to combine cloud computing and data storage with novel networking scenarios. This enables developers to research new, faster, cheaper, or more flexible ways of running applications in the cloud.

According to Josep Martrat of ATOS (http://www.atos.net), BonFIRE project director, "By making BonFIRE's test bed available, the EU is encouraging European SMEs to launch new cloud services and become a part of a multi-billion euro € market without having to invest in capital infrastructure. Commercial testing services are rare and they cannot offer the detailed level of analysis that BonFIRE offers, enabling businesses to perfect the performance prior to launch."

RedZinc (http://www.redzinc.net) was one of the companies involved in BonFIRE's beta programme testing the system's capabilities. Donal Morris, the company's founder and CEO, commented, "Research and testing is an expensive part of bringing new applications and services to market. Unless you are a large corporation with your own testing environment the options are limited and costly.

"BonFIRE is especially important for network infrastructure testing. We were impressed with the way BonFIRE enabled us to configure network parameters and to fine-tune the performance to a very granular level of detail. This allowed RedZinc to dynamically configure virtual path slices enabling a prioritised right-of-way for traffic from the virtualised desktop servers and thin clients," he added.

About BonFIRE

The BonFIRE consortium brings together world-leading industrial and academic organisations in cloud computing to deliver a robust, reliable and sustainable facility for large-scale, experimentally-driven cloud research. Multinational companies (ATOS, HP, SAP), renowned universities and supercomputing centres (UCM, EPCC, HLRS Stuttgart, IBBT, TUB), research centres (IT Innovation, FhG Fokus, Inria, i2CAT) and technology analysts (451 Research) provide the complementary expertise and infrastructure resources necessary to accelerate the research and development within the systems and services research community.

In September 2011, the consortium was extended to include Poznan Supercomputing and Networking Center, Poland and NextWorks in Pisa, Italy, to develop the networking features of BonFIRE. As a result of the first open call, the consortium was extended in September 2011 to include additional research centres and companies using the facility for cloud computing research, namely University of Manchester, UK, CESGA in Spain, CETIC in Belgium, and Cloudium Systems and RedZinc, two SMEs based in Ireland.

As a result of the second open call, the consortium was extended in September 2012 to include additional research centres and companies using the facility for cloud computing research, namely ICCS/National Technical University of Athens, Televes SA in Spain, MTA SZTAKI Hungary, IN2 in UK and Germany and the University of Patras, Greece. In addition, cloud provider Wellness Telecom, Spain, became an additional BonFIRE site.

The BonFIRE project has received research funding from the EC's Seventh Framework Programs (EU ICT-2009-257386 IP under the Information and Communication Technologies Program).

For any organisation interested in finding out more, please contact: bonfire@bonfire-project.eu

Each request for free access will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis considering business impact, infrastructure use and quality criteria.

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