

European Technology Forum Alpbach 2011

Workshop Summary: “IT – Challenging the Present, Defining the Future”

Big questions in Information Technology were the center of the opening keynote and discussion of this year’s Upper Austrian workshop at the European Technology Forum Alpbach. Questions like “How can we understand and safely control the highly interconnected architecture of billions of computers?” sparked discussion and brought a glimpse into the innovations and trends of tomorrow.

Such view into the future clearly prompted questions of innovation, and how innovative ideas and initiatives need to show tangible business and market value while leading to a “smarter planet” and delivering value to the advancement of mankind. Related innovation means the transformation of an invention into a business model with the potential of sustainable earnings.

The evolution and future of Cloud computing as a next generation computing platform, and how we interact with information was the key topic of the following presentation. Cloud computing reorganizes and stores masses of data and applications in mega-datacenters which can be accessed from virtually anywhere via incredibly powerful mobile computing platforms.

This enormous volume of information available raised discussion on security and privacy. Today’s cyber-attacks are sophisticated and well-funded, and the nature of the emerging security threats and their implications for business and society were examined.

Another area of discussion covered technical as well as legal and non-governmental standards and how they play an important role in building organizational and market frameworks for innovations.

While cloud computing is shaping the future IT architecture, operating highly efficient data centers with respect to computing power, carbon, and water is imperative. The move away from traditional, monolithic, raised floor mega data centers towards new, modular components that will help to reduce energy and resource waste, and increase scalability was the focus of the final presentation.

In summary, it is beyond question that Information Technology is one of the driving forces of today’s world with a deep impact on literally all aspects of life, and it is our responsibility to innovate and define its future with a focus on preserving natural resources, and protecting security and privacy of our data.

Chair:

Gerhard Eschelbeck

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