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Cloud Computing Adds Value

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There are two major conferences being held in the Denver/Boulder area regarding organic, green, entrepreneurship and venture capitalists seeking to support environmentally sensitive firms. You can find information on them here <http://www.naturallyboulderproducts.com/days/program-and-events.html> and here www.cleanenergyforum.com. Expect to see a lot of content from me this week on both of these events. With over 500 investors from around the world, and over \$1.7 billion invested in enviro-centric companies through just one of these channels in the past five years, there is a lot to discuss.

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Within turmoil is opportunity. As the global economy churns and lurches, there are segments that have long term sustainability. Green and environmentally sensitive businesses are poised to take advantage of multiple trends that are converging; trends like global warming, telecommuting, and working within the cloud.

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Speaking of cloud computing, I had the opportunity to speak with Mr. Hal Anderson, CTO of 24by7 Service (www.24by7service.com), regarding their project management tools. This company provides a measured, intelligent solution to migrating from PBX technology to voice over IP that is vendor agnostic. They are not beholden to any of the telcos, and do not have a vested interest in any particular VoIP solution. Their role is to assist companies in leveraging IP-based communications solutions when and where it makes sense. They never, ever, recommend a rip-and-replace. Their philosophy is one I share: squeeze every last nickel of value out of existing technologies before getting rid of it, but take advantage of emerging technologies when and where it makes sense.

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As an aside, we had a good time drawing numerous parallels between the telephony industry and the auto industry within this country. Oligopolies with players that remained in denial of changing market dynamics way too long are two areas that are consistent between the two industries. There were many more parallels, but you get the idea of where that part of the conversation went.

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But I digress, the point I wanted to make regarding 24by7 Services is their project management tool. As a geographically dispersed company, with its talent as well as customers scattered all over the continent, the company was seeking a tool that met their business requirements. One of their challenges was coordinating the players on any given project to meet via teleconference for status updates. The time zone issue was a barrier to timely status updates and reporting, a critical component the company provides to its customers. In addition, most of the technicians are not project management certified, so the tool needed to be easy to use, almost intuitive in process flows and orders of operation. They found their solution in Clarizen (www.clarizen.com), an in-the-cloud, software as a service, project management tool. Clarizen integrates with some of their other customer facing applications such as ticketing and monitoring, making the product a good solution for 24by7 Services. An independent review of Clarizen can be found here: <http://online-project-management->

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review.toptenreviews.com/clarizen-review.html.

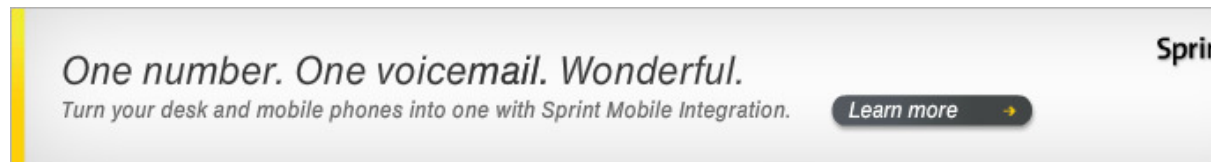
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Green computing is undoubtedly the next major wave in technology.Â What that means exactly is up to the individual companies seeking to obtain that label.Â It could be taking advantage of hosted and managed services, working in the cloud, software as a service, Web 2.0 technologies, but at the end of the day collaboration will be at the core and carbon footprints will be measurable.

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Have a great week, and watch this space this week for some personal interviews with VCs and green companies.Â If there is something you want me to be sure to address with these audiences, drop me a note.Â Iâ€™ll be sure to fit it into the interviews.

Â If you are using any other cloud-based project management tools, tell me how they are working out for you.



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