
A Cost Effective Cloud Datacenter Capacity Planning Method Based on Modality Cost Analysis

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Abstract: In resource provisioning for datacenters, an important issue is how resources may be allocated to an application such that the service level agreements (SLAs) are met. Resource provisioning is usually guided by intuitive or heuristic expectation of performance and existing user model. Provisioning based on such methodology, however, usually leads to more resources than are actually necessary. While such overprovisioning may guarantee performance, this guarantee may come at a very high cost. A quantitative performance estimate may guide the provider in making informed decisions about the right level of resources, so that acceptable service performance may be provided in a cost-effective manner. A quantitative estimate of application performance must consider its workload characteristics. Due to the complex workload characteristics of commercial software, estimation of its performance and provisioning to optimize for cost is not straightforward. In this work we looked at breaking the application into isolated modalities (modality is a scenario in which an application is used, for example, instant messaging, and voice calls are two different modalities of a media application) and measuring resource cost per modality as an effective methodology to provision datacenters to optimize for performance and minimize cost. When breaking the application into modalities, resource cost is assessed in isolation. Results are then aggregated to estimate the overall resource provisioning requirements. A validation tool is used to simulate the load and validate the assumptions. This was applied to a commercially available solution and validated in a datacenter setting.

Keywords: Cloud Performance, Capacity Planning, Datacenter Provisioning.

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1 Introduction and motivation

It is one of the responsibilities of service providers to ensure appropriate resources are allocated to each tenant to guarantee acceptable performance of their products. The relationship between capacity planning and performance tuning is often misunderstood [13]. While they affect each other significantly, they have different goals. Performance tuning optimizes an existing system for better performance, while capacity planning determines what the system needs while maintaining the performance baseline. In order to guarantee performance SLAs, service

providers in the Cloud tend to over provision mainly due to the lack of capacity planning tools that guide such optimization of performance and cost, and SLA violations are costly for Cloud hosted applications. A quantitative measurement of the resource cost (CPU, memory, storage, and network bandwidth) imposed by each of the modalities of the product, in isolation, may allow organizations to make informed decisions with respect to the right level of resource provisioning. The objective of this paper is to illustrate a tested methodology to guide resource provisioning decisions. In this paper, we first present a systematic methodology to estimate the performance expected from each modality based on the representation of resource cost per modality. Subsequently, we discuss how the estimate of the expected application performance could guide resource provisioning decisions. We illustrate the methodology using a commercially available media application, the Microsoft Lync Server 2010. Then we validate the performance estimation and resource provisioning methodology using a validation software tool to simulate a realistic workload against a production datacenter with all the modalities working together. The layout of the paper is as follows: Section 2 provides an overview of media applications performance. Section 3 provides an overview of the Modality Cost Analysis, our capacity planning methodology. Sections 4 and 5 present the results of our performance analysis and our validation tool. Section 6 discusses hardware benchmarks, and Sections 7 and 8 summarize the related research and offer concluding remarks and directions for future research.

2 Media applications performance

The performance of real time media applications may be divided into two main categories, each categorized by the requirements of their intended applications. Conversational applications are characterized by their stringent delay constraints, or latency, which makes it bound by the network bandwidth and processor speed. On the other hand, media messaging is delay-insensitive as it operates in similar way to email and bound by storage capacity. Performance analysis for media applications can be addressed from two perspectives: end-user's and service provider's perspective. A customer interacts with media applications through a series of consecutive but unrelated requests. This request sequence is termed as a session. Each session can include a combination of audio, video, instant messaging, or application and desktop sharing. Metrics such as response time, session length, session availability, and quality of service are

important from a user's perspective. On the other hand, metrics such as throughput, latency, and resource usage are important from a provider's perspective since they can guide the capacity planning and affect total cost and SLA guarantees. In this paper, we consider the performance from a provider's perspective since our focus is on capacity planning. Other research has considered the end user perceived performance with a focus on ecommerce applications [2], and provider's perceived performance with the a focus on ecommerce applications [1].

3 Modality cost analysis (MCA)

Modality Cost Analysis is a methodology for assessing resource cost for each of the modalities of an application. In this methodology, the application is broken into a set of modalities and each is measured for resource cost (CPU, Network bandwidth, Storage, and Memory) in isolation. The first rationale behind using isolated cost analysis rather than the aggregated cost of the application in its entirety is that the workload for different modalities varies dramatically, and aggregation may not capture these variations. The second rational is that Cloud providers may need to allocate resources based on their customers' user-profile. For example when hosting communication software on the Cloud, one customer may be a heavy instant messaging user, another may be a heavy video chat user, and a third one may be a very heavy voice customer such as a call center. Instant messaging is CPU intensive while video and voice calls are network bandwidth intensive. Using this methodology, the service provider will be able to allocate resources appropriately and accurately for these different user profiles according to what they are going to be using.

When using modality cost analysis, resource cost is calculated separately, namely, the CPU cost, the Network cost, and the memory cost, and any other cost that might be relevant to the provider such as storage in scenarios where the application storage requirements are significant.

In order to simplify our methodology, we consider N tenants with their distribution denoted by T_1, T_2, \dots, T_n . We consider m modalities, and r resources. The provider can calculate the resources needed using the following equation:

$$\text{Cost of resource } r \text{ of tenant } T = \sum_{i=0}^m N \quad (1)$$

where N is the modality cost of resources r .

For our experiments, for example, the CPU cost for instant messaging modality using Office Lync Server 2010 [12] was found to be:

$$0.745x + 5.4933 \quad (2)$$

where x is the number of concurrent users being provisioned.

The CPU cost for application sharing was found to be:

$$3.79x + 3.2667 \quad (3)$$

where x is the number of concurrent provisioned user.

These equations were deduced by capturing CPU utilization while varying number of users (see Fig. 3 below for CPU trend lines and section 4 for further information). Therefore, a provider wanting to calculate the CPU cost with these two modalities can obtain it simply by summing the resource cost of each modality being provisioned, that is by simply adding Eq. (2) and Eq. (3) above:

$$(5.4933 + 0.74x) + (3.2667 + 3.79x) \quad (4)$$

4 Experiments and results

In this section we present our early experiments with modality cost analysis. Two sets of experiments are performed. In the first set of experiments, we measure the resource overhead for four modalities in isolation, namely instant messaging, Voice over IP (VoIP), application sharing conference, and address book download. In the second set we measure the resource overhead for three scenarios that combine all of the four modalities together simulating a real end user experiment. The first

scenario is named MCA-S for small load, the second one is named MCA-M for medium load, and the third one named MCA-L for large load.

We illustrate the performance estimation based on the following hardware: A server with dual processors quad-core 2.0 GHz (2,000 megacycles per second), 16 gigabytes of memory, 30GB disk space, and 2-port 1 gigabit per second network adapter. The hardware topology remains fixed during our experimentation.

We use Office Lync Server 2010 (OLS)[12] which is an enterprise real-time communications server, providing the infrastructure for enterprise instant messaging, data collaboration conferencing and multiparty Voice and Video calling. These features are enabled within an organization, between organizations, and with external users on the public internet. This product is also provided as a Cloud offering as part of Office 365.

We ran OLS on the above described hardware server. In the first experiment, we simulated users using instant messaging modality only (in isolation where no other modality is running). In experiment 2, we simulated users making VoIP calls with no other modality running. In experiment 3, we simulated users joining a conference call and sharing a power point presentation. In experiment 4, we simulated users downloading an address book.

For the first experiment, we simulated 5000 users sending IM messages to each other at the same time. We measured the CPU utilization over a period of 4 hours and obtained the average CPU utilization of the server. We also calculated the CPU utilization using megacycles. We obtained the megacycles by multiplying our experiment server megacycles (2,000) by the number of cores (8) or a total of 16,000 megacycles per server. For example, if a modality is utilizing 10% of server processors resources, we calculate that it is consuming 1,600 megacycles. In addition, we captured network bandwidth and memory utilization. Then, we increased the load and simulated 10,000 simultaneous users, and finally we simulated 15,000 simultaneous IM users. Table 1 below shows the result of our data collection.

Table 1 First Experiment Results

Instant Messaging Users	CPU %/Server	CPU Megacycles	Network/Bytes	Memory/Bytes
5000	6.21	998	1,596,403	117,435,418
10000	7.04	1,126	2,011,843	136,765,376
15000	7.70	1,232	2,317,056.51	141,518,365

Table 2 Second Experiment Results

VoIP Users	CPU %/Server	CPU Megacycles	Network/Bytes	Memory/Bytes
200	1.02	163	104,508	268,334,836
400	1.7	272	216,545	269,283,186
600	2.48	396	320,444.62	281,681,544

Table 3 Third Experiment Results

Application Sharing Conference	CPU %/Server	CPU Megacycles	Network/Bytes	Memory/Bytes
100 users	6.95	1,112	7,164,641	517,244,781
200 users	11.06	1,769	9,990,548.47	793,322,894
250 users	14.53	2,324	13,589,203.86	991,254,808.25

Table 4 Fourth Experiment Results

Address Book Download	CPU %/Server	CPU Megacycles	Network/Bytes	Memory/Bytes
5000 entries	1.84	294	157,286	53,965,229
10000 entries	1.97	315	185,179.73	52,671,103
15000 entries	3.63	580	395,116.23	53,686,217

In the second experiment, we simulated 200, 400, and 600 users making VoIP calls simultaneously. Table 2 above shows the resource cost for each run.

In the third experiment, we simulated a conference call with application sharing and 100, 200, and 250 users connecting simultaneously. Table 3 above shows the resource cost for each run.

In the fourth experiment, we simulated 1000 simultaneous users downloading an address book with 5000, 10000, and 15000 contacts, respectively. Table 4 above shows the resource cost for each run.

Using the above results, for example, a provider that wants to provision 10,000 IM users, 6,000 VoIP users, and 250 application sharing conference, will need: $7.04 + 2.48 + 14.53 = \sim 24\%$ of the CPU resource of one server (with 2.0 GHz and 8 cores or a total of 3,840 megacycles), and $136,765,376 + 281,681,544 + 991,254,808.25 = \sim 1.4\text{GB}$ of memory. Using such methodology, providers can plan their capacity to the exact

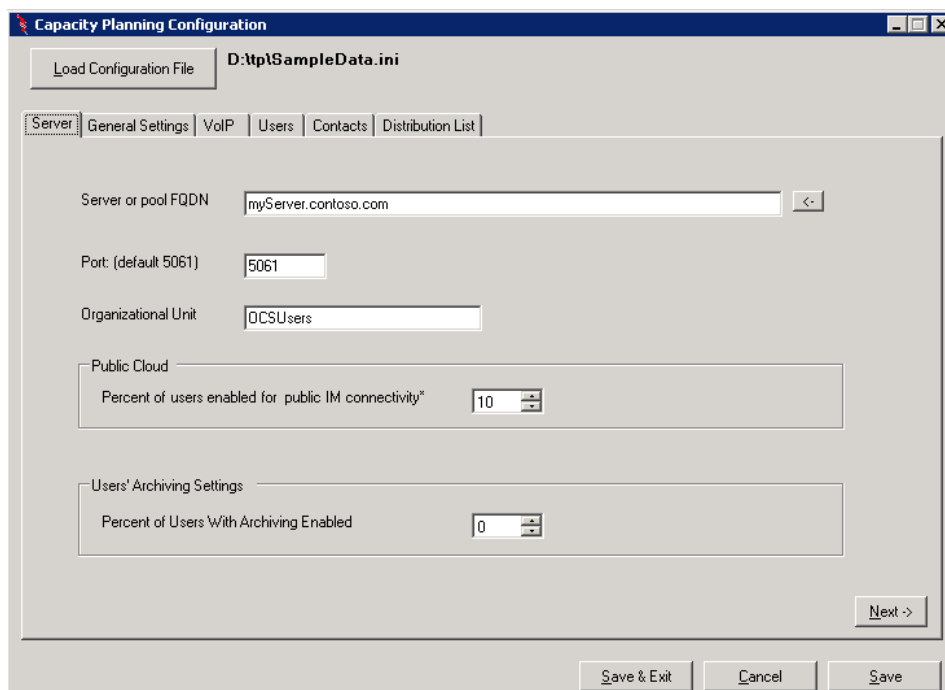
needs without having to overprovision. Providers that want to utilize this methodology and apply it to a different hardware profile can benchmark the processor used in this experiment against existing or planned hardware. Section 6 discusses this method in more details.

5 Validation methodology

In the second set of experiments, we mixed the four modalities together to validate that measuring resources in isolation is an acceptable methodology for datacenter provisioning. In order to prove this hypothesis, we ran three experiments mixing IM, VoIP, Address Book download, and Application Sharing conference, using a tool called Office Lync Server Stress (LSS). LSS generates a simulated load on Office Lync Server. For example, when we set up IM users, the tool will send instant messages between different simulated users based on the load that we specify (in this case, 5000 users sending instant messages (at a rate of 4 instant messages per user per hour). This user profile remains constant across all the experiments.

Fig. 1 shows a snapshot of the Lync Server Stress tool.

Figure 1 Lync Server Stress Tool GUI



The first experiment, named MCA-S, simulates a user using all the four modalities in smaller quantities. To do this, we set up the same hardware that we used to run the modalities in isolation and then we used Lync Server Stress tool and simulated the server with 5000 Instant Messaging users sending messages to each other where each user is sending 4 IMs/hour (the same load as when we ran the modality in isolation). Then we loaded 200 VoIP calls, 1000 users downloading 5000 contact simultaneously, and 100 users sharing a power point presentation (5 MB size).

Table 5 below summarizes what we found.

In order to calculate the average, we ran the experiment on 4 servers independently. The chart presented in Fig. 2 below shows the CPU average for each of the servers.

As shown in Fig. 2, the averages for the four CPUs are 19.13%, 13.81%, 9.16%, and 15.82% or an aggregate average of 14.48%. Also it is important to note that we ran the experiment for 2 hours and collected the data every ten minutes as shown in Fig. 2.

Figure 2 CPU average for each server.

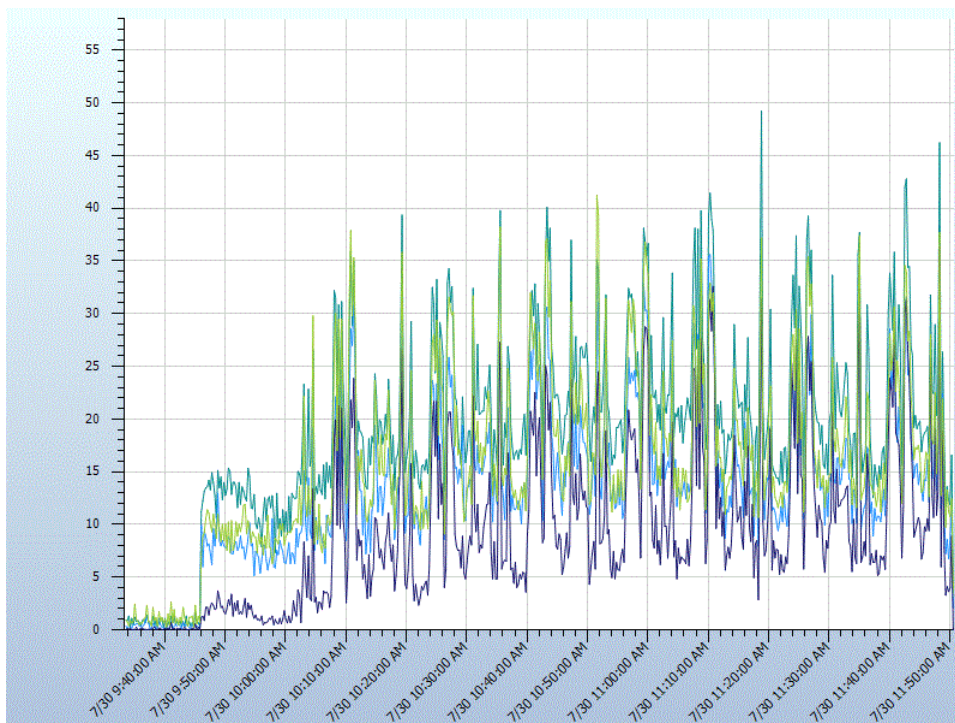


Table 5 MCA-S Experiment Results

MCA-S		CPU % /Server	CPU Megacycles	Network /KBytes	Memory /KBytes
	IM 5000 users	6.21	994	1,596	127,435
	VoIP 200 calls	1.02	163	104	268,334
	ABS 5000 contact	1.84	294	157	53,965
	App Sharing Conference 100 users	6.95	1,112	7,164	517,244
	Total of Isolated Measurements	16.02	2,563	9,022	956,980
	Measured Resource Cost	14.48	2,316	8,382	1,086,426
	Diff	-10%	-10%	-7.10%	11.90 %

Table 6 MCA-M Experiment Results

MCA-M		CPU % /Server	CPU Megacycles	Network /KBytes	Memory /KBytes
	IM 10000 users	7.04	1,126	2,011	136,765
	VoIP 400 calls	1.77	283	216	269,283
	ABS 10000 contact	1.97	315	185	52,671
	App Sharing Conference 200 users	11.06	1,770	9,990	793,322
	Total of Isolated Measurements	21.84	3,494	12404	1,252,042
	Measured Resource Cost	19.89	3,182	11,676	1,304,269
	Diff	-10%%	-10%	-6%	4%

Table 7 MCA-L Experiment Results

MCA-L		CPU % /Server	CPU Megacycles	Network /Kbytes	Memory /KBytes
	IM 15000 users	7.70	1,232	2,317	141,518
	VoIP 600 calls	2.48	454	320	281,681
	ABS 15000 contact	3.63	580	395	53,686
	App Sharing Conference 250 users	14.53	2,324	13,589	991,254
	Total of Isolated Measurements	28.34	4,534	16,621	1,468,140
	Measured Resource Cost	33.98	5,436	16,953	1,492,496
	Diff	16%	16%	2%	1.3%

The second experiment, named MCA-M, simulates a user using all the four modalities in medium quantities. Table 6 above summarizes what we found.

The third experiment, named MCA-L, simulates a user using all the four modalities in large quantities. The outcome of that is summarized in Table 7 above.

The results show that measuring modalities in isolation and using the results to provision datacenter is an effective methodology. The variance between measuring in isolation and measuring the modalities running side by side is within $\pm 16\%$. In order to better plan for such variance, we recommend adding an adequate buffer for covering variation in side-by-side versus aggregated execution. 10% to 30% buffer is considered a minor buffer compared to current hardware overprovisioning estimates of 200-300% in best cases, and 5% to 10% of server resource utilizations in some of the worse cases [6].

The following figures, Fig. 3-5, summarize the results of the three experiments. By adding trend lines to the chart lines, we can see that the modalities grow linearly. Using the equations discussed in section 3 above, we can predict the utilization at any point. We expect each modality to hit a ceiling level which is not captured in these experiments.

Figure 3 CPU utilization

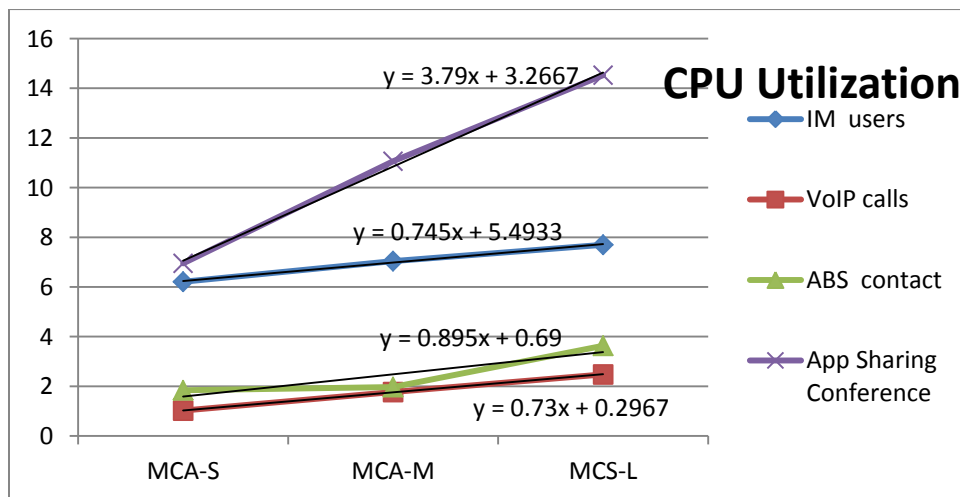


Figure 4 Memory utilization

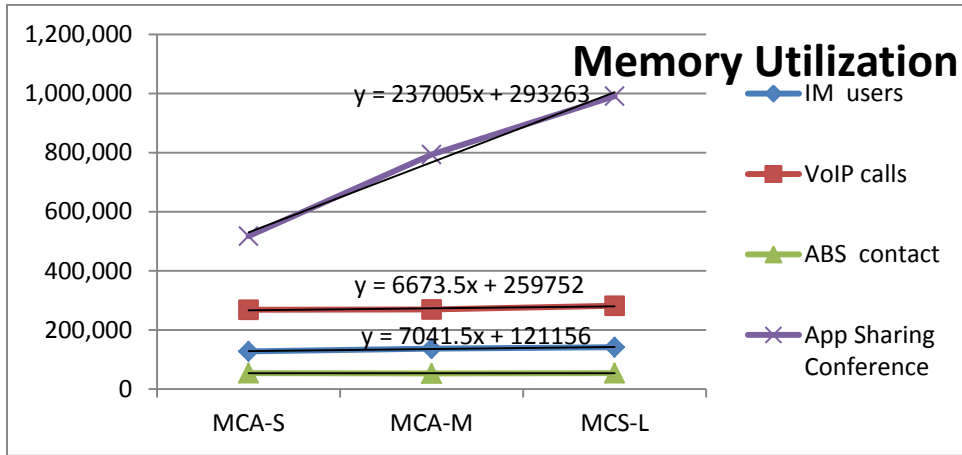
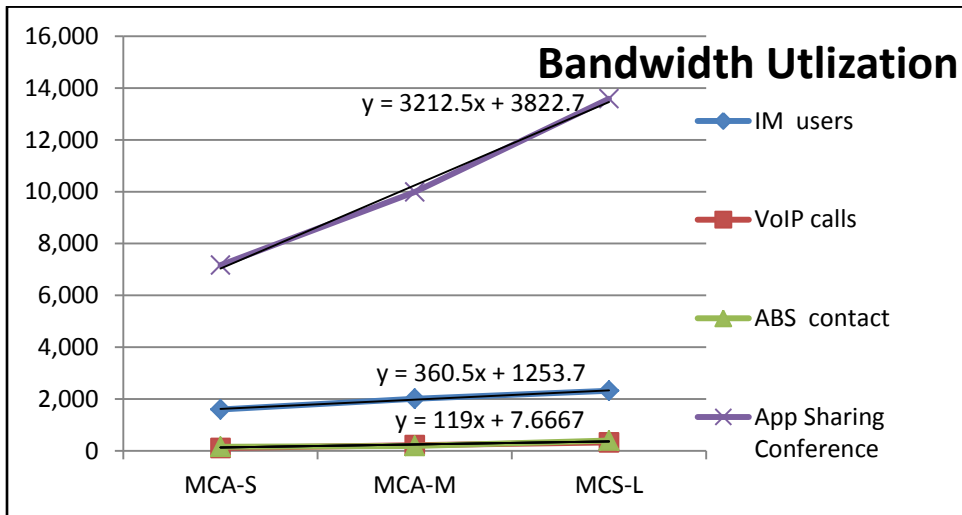


Figure 5 Bandwidth utilization



6 Hardware benchmarks

Rapid change in hardware and the multitude of different hardware configurations available nowadays make it difficult for any provider wanting to adopt performance optimization or capacity planning methodologies. For example, a provider validating against existing hardware may find that the hardware is not available during procurement time. In order to ensure that our methodology is not hardware specific,

benchmarking techniques can be used to adapt the methodology and equations identified in this work to different hardware settings. For example, processor benchmarking tools such as SPECint [16] can be used. The SPECint processor benchmark for the hardware used in our methodology is 186 for eight cores or 23.25 per core. So, providers interested in using this performance validation methodology against a different hardware can use the following steps:

1. Visit the SPECint website [16]
2. Select SPECint2006 Rates
3. Find the server and processor they have deployed or intend to deploy, and look at the number in the Result column.
4. Dividing this value by the number of cores in the server returns the per-core value. For example, if the Result number is 240 on an eight-core server, the per-core value is 30.
5. The following equation can then be used to determine the per-core megacycles for the server: $(Per\text{-}core\ value) \times 2,000 / 23.25$
6. Finally, by multiplying the result above by the number of cores in the server, the total number of megacycles per server is obtained. This is then compared to the 16,000 megacycles for the baseline server used to produce the numbers in our experiments.

In order to clarify this further, consider the following example. Assume a provider to provision the following modalities as summarized in Table 8 below.

Table 8 Benchmarking example modalities

Modality	Test server CPU% cost	Megacycles needed
IM 15000 users	7.70	$(7.7/100) * 2,000 * 8 = \mathbf{1,232}$
VoIP 600 calls	2.48	$(2.48/100) * 2,000 * 8 = \mathbf{396}$
ABS 15000 contact	3.63	$(3.63/100) * 2,000 * 8 = \mathbf{580}$
App Sharing Conference 250 users	14.53	$(14.53/100) * 2,000 * 8 = \mathbf{2325}$
Total	~28% of total server CPUs	4,533 total megacycles needed

For this example, suppose we are deploying servers with a SPECint result of 186 for 8 cores, which averages out to 23.25 per core. Using the

calculations explained in the previous sections, we can compute the megacycles of the servers, which would be 16,000 megacycles each in this case.

To determine the number of such servers required to provision the above modalities, the number of needed megacycles (4,533) can be divided by the number of megacycles per server (16,000 in this example). This can easily be replaced by the number of megacycles represented by the hardware being utilized.

Thus, in this example, we need circa 28% of total server CPU resources to run the modalities in the table above.

7 Related research

Datacenter provisioning and performance optimization has been an active research area for the past several years. Most of the research that we reviewed addresses dynamic provisioning [7-10] and virtualization [11]. Other research addressed resource provisioning in ecommerce applications [1],[2]. Our research focuses on static provisioning in datacenters where the provider understands the user model and performance expectations but lacks the tools to provision according to exact needs. The key factor that distinguishes our work from related efforts is that they consider all the application components in an aggregated manner while our research proposes and validates a methodology to measure each modality in isolation. Also, our research simulates the methodology in commercial media application in use today and is used to guide performance and capacity planning for Office Lync Server 2010. A published capacity planning calculator based on the methodology described in this work can now be downloaded from the Microsoft website [17].

8 Conclusion & future work

In this paper we presented a quantitative methodology for capacity planning in cloud datacenters. We use the results to guide providers into provisioning datacenters for optimizing performance and cost. By profiling an application into a set of modalities and measuring hardware resources cost in isolation, cloud providers should be able to pin point their capacity to exact needs without wasting expensive resources. We discussed how to validate the results by running three sets of experiments, MCA-S, MCA-M, and MCA-L. These experiments represented small, medium, and large user profiles. The results showed that measuring

modalities in isolation and using the results to provision datacenters is an effective methodology. We also discussed a process for applying hardware benchmarks for scenarios where experimental hardware servers differ from deployment hardware or for upgrading hardware servers without invalidating experimental results. As one of the future research directions, we intend to address virtualization using modality cost analysis methodology and address any effects or limitations. This work can extensively benefit from virtualization to dynamically allocate resources based on usage profiles. In order to achieve this, we plan to look at Windows Azure as a virtualization platform where we can deploy MCA and provision dynamically in order to reduce the total cost of ownership while maintaining SLAs.

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