

As a global executive with IBM and the Chairman of it@cork, the representative body for more than 300 IT companies, Denis Collins is well aware of the potential that Cloud Computing has. He spoke with Alan Healy on how the Cork region, and Ireland as a whole, can benefit from this new technology.

A NEW Yorker with Cork roots Denis Collins has considerable experience in the IT area.

He knows Cork very well and is passionate about the talent and skills of our workforce.

Working with IBM, he is also the chairman of it@cork and is therefore well aware of the potential Cloud Computing has.

it@cork, a leading not-for-profit independent business organisation, represents the interests of the IT industry in Ireland.

Mr Collins said: "There are times in business when things happen that can have a major impact.

"From an IT industry perspective, in the last 25 to 30 years, there have been some critical events. One of them is the advent of the PC and the laptop. Then there was the emergence of the internet/social media and its global connectivity."

"Now, I think another critical event in time is cloud computing."

Analysts predict by 2014 the worldwide cloud computing industry could be worth between €11 billion and €40 billion, so it is imperative that Ireland again punches above its weight and secures a slice of the action.

As Mr Collins explains, it is not a lofty ambition for Cork and Ireland to become a cloud computing hub.

"Just look at the jobs that have been created in the last couple of months in Cork and Munster; Dell, Quest, Mycroft, IBM, EMC, VMware, Blizzard, Big Fish Games, they've all had recent announcements that one way or the other have something to do with cloud.

"When you add in the other major companies such as Google and eBay, Ireland has every top IT multinational already here.

"The messaging is out there, the momentum is out there and sometimes that's half the game. The IDA is doing a good job in promoting this," he said.

"Cloud computing is here to stay. The application of it will evolve. I'm sure there will be pivotal moments when it may go in a different direction but it is here to stay."

He adds that many people would not even be aware of some of the innovative work in the sector already taking place here in Cork.

"There are people in Cork doing things today in cloud computing that we don't even know about."

"In it@cork we have an initiative

Cork is ready to capitalise on Cloud Computing technology



Denis Collins of IBM and chairman of it@cork believes we should use the presence of high-tech multinationals in Cork to promote the region as a centre for development of cloud computing.

called 'Innovation Matters' which aims to identify, recognise and promote innovation in Irish companies. Many of the innovative ideas we are seeing have connections with cloud computing," he said.

Innovation Matters is sponsored by Bord Gáis Networks, Cork County Council and Barlogue Consultancy Services. The winner will participate in a Cork County Council IT trade mission to Chicago in early 2012.

Of course, given Ireland's economic difficulties any technology which has the potential to create new jobs will be a welcome one.

Mr Collins is quick to point out that there are 6% more people working in Ireland's IT industry now than there was a year ago, something very few other industries can say. He also said that as well as the new jobs created directly in the cloud computing industry the technology also has the potential to foster Ireland's entrepreneurial spirit in industries unrelated to IT and computing.

"From an entrepreneurial startup perspective, it gives people the ability to go into business with little capital expenditure.

"So you can start a business with email packages, HR packages, data collection and other utilities over the cloud and this will also lead to job creation," he said.

In order to promote Cork and Ireland as a Cloud Computing hub Mr Collins said we could point to the existence of the top multinationals, the quality of our workforce and students and also to the number of top universities and ITs.

He commended the Cork Institute of Technology for creating the world's first Masters Degree in Cloud Computing.

However, the Government has a part to play as well, whether it's through direct use of cloud computing for Government functions or else using resources to promote Ireland as an attractive location for the world's top companies.

"From a bold big vision point of view, I really believe the Cork Dock-

lands area can be developed as an ITSC (Information Technology Services Centre) and be a world-class centre for cloud computing."

"In the same way, as the IFSC (Irish Financial Services Centre) was built in the Dublin Docklands for financial services, the Cork docklands can be built for the IT industry.

"It is a long-term view and would need bold investment in infrastructure such as broadband bandwidth and access.

"But we have the multinationals, we would have the space, we have the universities and the ITs, we have good alignment with the City and County Council and we have the people. They said the IFSC was a crazy idea 25 years ago."

Mr Collins said that Cork and Ireland is really at the beginning of tapping into cloud computing.

"In relation to job creation, we are at the tip of the iceberg as to what might happen here."

For further information on it@cork visit: www.itcork.ie

What is CLOUD COMPUTING?

● CLOUD computing generally refers to people accessing information, files and services over the internet rather than from their computer's own hard disk or their company's server.

Traditionally, a company stores important information in a computer room with rows and rows of large server equipment.

However, as the speed of the internet and broadband has increased companies can now store important information 'in the cloud'.

It means the information can be stored on a server anywhere in the world and is then accessed over the internet by the company in question when it is needed.

Number of local multinationals ready to lead the way

CORK is in a strong position to capitalise on the growing Cloud Computing technology because so many of the companies involved in the industry already have a significant presence in the region.

Here are just some of the companies working in the Cloud Computing fields.

EMC — Ovens

● One of Cork's biggest employers with almost 2,000 staff, the EMC Corporation is the world leader in products and services for storage and management of data, a key part of cloud computing.

VMware — Ballincollig

● With a base in Ballincollig with approximately 300 staff VMware is a global leader in virtualisation and cloud infrastructure. It creates tailored solutions for customers that enables them to adopt a cloud model that addresses the challenges to their business. The company has more than 250,000 customers and 25,000 partners.

Trend Micro — Model Farm Road

● Specialists in security software and services Trend Micro is the largest independent security company in the world.

The company is now ranked the number one global leader in cloud based security and virtualisation.

The company's European, Middle East and African headquarters was established in Cork more than eight years ago. The company employs more than 200 people in Cork in a variety of roles.

McAfee — Mahon

Another dedicated security technology company, McAfee has a base in Mahon with almost 300 staff.

The company focuses on virus protection and blocking attacks by malicious software. They allow users to protect their own data which is ac-

cessed from the cloud using security measures.

Quest — Mahon

● One of Cork's newest multinational arrivals Quest Software now has a major centre based in Mahon with plans to employ 150 people.

The company designs, develops and markets network management products for their customers.

Quest has more than 100,000 customers worldwide and more than 60 offices in 23 countries.

Solarwinds — Mahon

● This company develops simple and powerful software for managing

computer networks, small or large.

They deliver affordable and scalable products that can be downloaded over the internet. SolarWinds products are used by more than one million network engineers around the world.

The company employs approximately 75 people in Cork.

IBM — Cork Airport

● One of the world's most recognisable computer companies, IBM has had a presence in Ireland for more than 50 years.

It has software development laboratories in Dublin, Galway and in Cork.