



# CLOUD REALITIES

**CRLIVE001**

AWS Innovation Insights with  
Tom Metzeler, AWS

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# AWS Innovation Insights with Tom Metzeler, AWS

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[00:00:00] All right. Hello, everyone. Welcome to cloud realities live. It's a conversation show about cloud driven transformation and what it really means for businesses.

Welcome to Cloud Realities, a conversation show exploring the practical and exciting alternate realities that can be unleashed through cloud driven transformation. I'm David Chapman. I'm the chief cloud evangelist at Capgemini. And I'm usually joined by Sjoukje Zaal, who's my co host on the, on the show. And it normally comes out on a Thursday morning. Unfortunately, Sjoukje can't be with us this week, but as a special treat for us all, We have a roving reporter with us, Rob Kernahan.

Rob, do you want to introduce yourself? Hello, hello. Very nice to be on the podcast. I've been grateful to be here on the expo, uh, floor. [00:01:00] So I'm actually in our Cloud Center of Excellence, and I'm our Chief Architect for Cloud in the UK. So all things cloud, very good. Good to see you. And how's your Vegas been so far, Rob?

I think the best way to describe it is Vegas is unique, and we'll leave it there. But it's all very exciting. Are you feeling blurry this morning, or feeling clear? Clearer. Clearer. Clearer. Yes, absolutely. But you can tell it's Vegas when you check into a hotel. We checked into our hotel. Uh, at the beginning of the week and, um, you had to sign a no party disclaimer for your rooms, which is something I've never had to, I've never had to. That's a new one.

Yeah. Never had to sign one of those before. Anyway, I took a photo of it. You just know there's a very good reason why they had those disclaimers out, don't you? You know, something happened. There was an insurance claim somewhere in that I, I'm wearing now, I think. Yeah. And you, you might have heard Tom in the background.

We are j we are very happy to be John mate. Tom Metzeler. Uh, Tom's part of the, of the AWS Partner Solutions Group, Tom. Welcome. Would you like to introduce yourself? Well, thanks for having me, first of all. Great pleasure. Great to [00:02:00] be here and talk about innovation and how we can drive innovation to our customers to drive their business outcomes.

You're going to ask me what I like about Vegas or how I find Vegas? I'm going to get to that in a second. Just tell us a little bit about what your day job is. Yeah, sure. So my day job when I'm not in Vegas is managing solution architects. Can you remember what your day job was at this point? I do, I do. I have notes.

Um, so managing solution architects is a group of teams that work with customers, working backwards from their business outcomes, defining solutions with them, building capabilities so they can actually operate it. Upscaling the teams that run these operations and work with partners. That's my role with partners like kept Germany and others to, um, uh, build the muscles to co sell cloud, not only as a selling motion, but also as a solution in motion of how do we address particular industry problems.

So that's what my team does. Well, brilliant. And we're going to, we're going to hear a lot more about that. I think in our discussion in a second, but yeah, anyway. [00:03:00] Do tell us, how's Vegas for you so far? Well, I didn't have that disclaimer that you had. So that means in your room you can have a party?

Apparently. We know where we're going after this. Yeah, we'll do it after that. Um, what's interesting I think is the sheer size of it and the sheer walking distance that you walk, right? Yeah. When I'm on a normal day, back at home, I walk like five, six thousand steps a day. Here it's five six thousand steps an hour literally by eight o'clock in the morning.

You've done five thousand steps And this morning we had a brilliant journey here. Didn't we



Rob got all the way here from our hotel We're staying a fair bit down the strip probably like a half an hour 40 minute walk to get here before you even start your Steps in the Venetian and we literally walking into the the main expo floor and Rob goes Oh, don't forget don't forget to put your badge on and I'm like, oh My badge, and it was back in my hotel room.

So I had to go anyway, so I had to sort of like, ashen faced walk up to the help [00:04:00] desk and get a new, a new badge. But anyway, we're here. So let's dig into AWS innovation process. Let's, let's start right at the beginning before we get to that though, and just give us your take, Tom, on the, on the tech innovation to business outcomes relationship.

In your head, how does that frame up in your, in your customer conversations? Yeah, absolutely. So what we do at AWS and what we work with our partners doing is how do you drive and understand the business outcomes that our customers want to achieve, right? And we have a mechanism for that that's called working backwards.

Sounds a bit awkward sometimes. Right, right. It does. It's counterintuitive perhaps sometimes. And what it means is actually you discover with your, together with the customer. What is the business outcome that you want to drive? We're not talking about technology at this point, right? We're just talking about business outcomes.

What is it that matters to you when you do your digital transformation? What do you want to achieve with your digital transformation? Is it more efficiency, [00:05:00] cost savings? Is it being more innovative? Is it to be more agile? Uh, and in many cases, it's all the three. Yeah, right, right, right. All at the same time and save some money.

Exactly. And actually the cloud That's in to a great extent enabled that when you migrate to the cloud, when you build your applications natively on cloud, you're building them at low cost. When you migrate, your cost goes down. When you modernize, your cost goes further down. So that frees up money. You can use that money for innovation, adding budgets for for doing that.

Now, when we then understand this business outcomes to your earlier point, is it how that does technology relate to that? Well, um, Once we understood what the business outcome is, we work together, what are the possible solutions, discovering the art of the possible, discovering what is, uh, what technologies do we have, what solutions do we have, or we need to build to drive against these business outcomes, and then build a plan very quickly, [00:06:00] as quickly as possible, building prototypes around it that can show the key elements of the solutions that we're going to drive, Right?

So the customer can actually buy in very early in the process and we can bring in the teams of the customers. We do that with C levels, with business. Activity created very quickly to get a sense of where we're going and to help shape decision making rather than try to whiteboard everything in minute detail.

But let's just wind back to working backwards. Let's dig into that process a little bit. So how, how does that actually work? Like what are the steps that you would go through to envisage that situation? Yeah. I like the term that you used, envisage, because that's the first step. Uh, we call it an envisioning session.

So we talk together with the most senior level that we, that we reach, right? That might be C level. And we really want to understand what drives you. Is it top line or bottom line? And what are the elements that you have from a strategic perspective in mind to get there? So that's step one. [00:07:00] Yeah. That defines us sort of the North Star.



Once we know what the North Star is, we can see what are the different projects that we would need to put in place to get to the North Star, right? And we do that either as AWS or we do it with partners. Step two. Step three then is discovering what other customers that we address with these solutions, right?

The customer of our customers. How would the user experience be? What changes will it drive? in the business model of our customers. So it's there, but then, we start shaping out what the solutions are, and most of the time, we actually write it all down into a document that we call PR FAQ. Another strange abbreviation, typical Amazon.

That's a press release. That's a press release that we actually, we simulate the announcement of this, the achievement of the business outcomes that we set out to do together [00:08:00] and describe how that would look like from a customer experience perspective, what the impact would be for the customer, how we did it all together, etc.

And the FAQ part is just, you know, setting the framework of how does it work, who is the customer that we address, what are the solutions that can drive it, and so forth. And what I think is particularly interesting about it as a technique is the It's the level of discipline that it drives, both in the envisaging process and then in the sort of, you know, in the FAQ, the sort of steps to get there, if you like.

Exactly, exactly. Um, and, and to me that fits really well with sort of purpose driven, purpose driven development. Why do you, why do you think purpose driven development is so key to driving the types of outcomes that you guys are sort of regularly delivering? Yeah, that's a good question. Actually, it simply ties back to the business outcomes that you want to drive.

But purpose driven development means we are looking at an area where we know exactly what we want to achieve. We are not just incrementally [00:09:00] adding features to something that exists. We define first what is the final outcome that we want to achieve. Right. And purpose driven development means we can focus our teams that develop code to work against these outcomes.

Right, right. And that... Flies in the face a little bit of what some people think of when they think of agile. Which is like, it's this sort of endless exploratory thing that can cost money and you can't really budget it properly. And actually it's so far from that if you do it properly, right? So how would you distinguish that misperception of what this can be like?

from the sort of formality that the PRFAQ process gives you? Well, good point. Um, in order to make sure that you don't have an endless development with churning out features that you demonstrate but they actually don't lead to this business outcome, you need to have a governance around it, right? So, the governance requires that you have, first of all, an executive sponsor, right?

Right. If you don't have an executive sponsor at the customer, [00:10:00] well, People will start playing around and coding stuff and code all day. They leave and code all day long. Love it. Yeah, they will play ping pong and have coffee and code, right? That's not what you want to achieve, of course. They can play ping pong, but let's first work against the business outcome.

Yeah, a little bit outcomes. So the governance means you need to have a framework of technical and business people that monitor the process of The actual building that pilot and demonstrating that pilot that we built back to the business owners and sponsors and then have a decision point here that looks good.

Let's iterate on top of it and move it forward to the next level. Right, right. And have you



got, I mean, you work, your day job, right, is actually running some of these processes with customers, isn't it? I think before we go on to, um, like some good examples, I'm sure you have in the back of your mind. How do customers interact with it, if [00:11:00] you see what I mean?

Because there are some, like, really different bits of the process. I know there's, like, things like the table read, which is, which is really different from most PowerPoint driven meetings today. So, first of all, tell us what the table read is like, and how does that go down when you first run that with a customer?

Yeah, it is an interesting, uh, experience. When I joined Amazon, just anecdotally, uh, I heard, I read about that, that there's a reading culture, there's a narrative culture, we don't do PowerPoints. Um, and that's an interesting point. When you do that the first time, going through the session, you're really puzzled what's happening, right?

Yeah, yeah, yeah. So, so how does it work with customers? The process of building up the PR FAQ, that's the document that guides us then through the execution, is Um, a collaborative process. You don't build it in a corner and then smash it in front of the customer and say, hey, here we go. Uh, it's a collaborative exercise, so that means the customer is actively involved in building it.

And now the, the, the narrative reading part [00:12:00] then is, we put it in the front of the audience. The executive board of a committee that, uh, uh, Has to sit and read it. Has to sit and read it. And we give them 10 15 minutes. Just read through the document. Understand what it means. Go through the FAQ. And then we open up for questions.

Right? And if the document is well written, Which hopefully is the case. Yeah, well, and you know, it's supposed to be, right? Like, you're supposed to actually put... time into crafting the language and the description, which is actually quite different from the way a lot of businesses run today. So yeah, so you've got a fluid document to read.

The thing that when I've sat in table reads, that I find quite fascinating, is rooms of senior people are not used to being quiet for 15 minutes. You know, they're used to having vibrant discussions and they've generally got opinions. So, like, how do you deal with that sort of cultural thing, you know?

Yeah, I think the way we do it normally is that [00:13:00] the one who presents the document, who wrote the document, who owned the build up in a collaborative way, will have to moderate the meeting, right? So, be quiet, CEO, please, for the next ten minutes. And then we'll CEO was involved in the envisioning part, was involved in some of the collaboration to get to the document, there will certainly be...

So much involved already that the part of getting them offline and Bringing new ideas is relatively manageable. Yeah. Well, so let's let's draw a Conversation to a bit of a conclusion with an example. So talk us talk us through a customer experience that you've had Yeah, a very good example. I have which is very recent Think about Aircraft industry, right a very An industry that's very heavily impacted by economic situations, right?

Yeah. Uh, certainly through covid and the lockdowns and the travel restrictions and what have you. [00:14:00] And so all these aircraft industries have lots of airplanes as we know. Um, puff of the cost that I think Yeah, indeed. You sort of stuck without it . Yeah, exactly. The It's a bit of a CapEx elementary that, that hurts.

Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Uh, so all these aircraft. Are have a lifecycle. Right. Once they hit the lifecycle, they have to be taken out of. Yep. Service. Yeah. Yeah. What happens usually is



that aircraft end up somewhere in the desert. Yeah, right. There's a big parking lot. They're rocking there. Yeah. There's a big parking lot here in Nevada actually.

Yeah. There's a big parking lot in the Middle East, so. Right, right, right, right. But what if you would recycle the parts that can be recycled? What would you, if you would sustainably. Dispose of these parts and what if, uh, that would create a new business opportunity? Yeah. Yeah, right. And so that's what the starting point of a discussion that we had with one aircraft manufacturer.

And, um, in building up, okay, [00:15:00] let's talk about it deeper. Can we go and envision around it what, can we build a solution around it? Is there a business opportunity? We did exactly the process that I described earlier. So we envisioned what the solution, what the solution could be to drive a new business that it actually puts aircraft parts into a market place.

End to end new business. Exactly. And so the technology that we use is obviously AWS, but the technology that we use wasn't part of the initial discussion. It was really, let's define how that business model looks like. Let's define the business outcome that we can achieve, circular economy. Using, uh, aircraft recycling, using proper disposal of parts that you cannot recycle, and work with aircraft manufacturers, airlines, uh, uh, you know, the leasing companies that own many of these aircrafts, work with them on this business model and build that marketplace.

Right. And once we had all these elements defined, then we can say, okay, what do we need in terms of technology to support all these different business elements? [00:16:00] Fantastic. And that included? Bye. Bye. All the way back into the recycling supply chain. Absolutely, absolutely. And here, then, we come back to the power of Amazon, where we could use for the distribution, the delivery of these parts, from where they are recycled to the recycler.

Right. Again, a supply chain that is already in place, right? leveraged. Yeah, absolutely. Power of Amazon. And is it up and running? It is, uh, will be up and running very shortly. We do, uh, we have, uh, I've gone through all this process of, as you said, reading silently the documents and going through prototyping and seeing how this element could work and we will put it into place very shortly.

Fantastic. Thanks, Tom. Amazing example. And now we're going to turn briefly at the end of the show to Rob. Rob, our roving reporter, been out on the, been out on the floor. Yes. Gathering, gathering trends, Rob. Been finding all the secrets that are going on. I'd just like to say to, uh, Tom Spock, what's fantastic about that process [00:17:00] is getting businesses to think differently.

Cloud's the enabler, but what's the visionary business model that we're going to come up with and how do we pivot as always? And I love the way you can take them through a different process and get them to imagine the way they can work differently. It's very, very powerful. Yeah. And actually I've not heard one that was a full end-to-end business idea like that I, I've heard quite a lot that are around sort of singular products.

Um, but like an the actual end-to-end launch of a, of a, of a business, particularly one that's so well grounded in, you know, sustainability is to be applauded. Huh? Yeah. Sustainability is a big driver for many of these, uh, engagements that we are having now, right? Yeah. All, all our company, all our all companies outside have sustainability targets for obvious reasons, right?

And so, If you are not in the greenwashing business, but you want to real, bring out real



solutions that address sustainability sustainably, then of course you are in a, in, in, in, in, with that process, you're driving really a number based outcome. You can say, I want to [00:18:00] reduce my CO2 footprint and become carbon neutral.

Yeah. Right. Right. So how do I measure that in the, how do I build the solutions that drive that? Fantastic. Well, we're going to dig into sustainability a little more in our show on Thursday morning. So if you're interested in that, then please come around. So Rob, what's trending? So, early announcements so far that are coming out broadly in four themes.

The first one is cloud sovereignty, which is a hot topic at the moment. In fact, I was with AWS team about what they're doing around sovereignty. Has released a really good article about what that means and how they're going to take it forward. What's interesting is the AWS strategy diverging from the other hyperscalers.

So, uh, there's that. It's still quite an immature market, but it's a huge market to chase. And if they crack it, it will be good and exciting. So I think the best one here is the game is clearly afoot with Sovereign Cloud. And we're waiting to see how that plays out with other nation states. Right, right. So, uh, yeah, so you'll hear a lot about that, um, this week around controls and getting through.

Accreditation [00:19:00] and things like that about rising to meet the challenge. And was it, in the announcements this week, is it, is it purely new config? Or is there, is there new tech involved in what they're talking about? So we're seeing new tech come out about actually understanding and demonstrating security positions, which is moving towards what the regulators would like.

I see. So that's quite good. We're seeing a lot of moves and in fact, brings me on to the second theme, data. Some of the things that are going on about all this data that we collect and understand it. Is it just digital litter or how do we create something interesting and exciting to actually do something with it?

Yeah, so we're seeing a lot more control and around the data. We're also seeing services that abstract and Um, make it less complex to deal with huge volumes of information. So going through metrics and understanding what actually means hunting the interesting information or things like Macy being targeted at huge data sets, trying to find personal identifiable information, security issues, all that sort of thing.

So we're seeing a lot of announcements about that. Come out. Did they have any sort of example use cases about what you might be able [00:20:00] to like? How does that? How did it show up in real life sort of thing? So you would essentially point it out and say, detect PII data, which shouldn't be there and things like that.

So being able to assure that the data sets that you're managing don't have anything in that they shouldn't have. Oh, that's for a lot of organizations. That's a really important thing. Because if you think about how many architectures work, do organizations really understand their data where it is and what insight they can get from it?

So with this automation around it, it becomes a very pragmatic way of de risking. Getting value out of your data. Yeah, well overdue, I would say, actually. Yeah, absolutely. Along with that, Digital Twins. It's gonna be big. So we're seeing a very interesting discussion. Going on here this week about the International Space Station OTIT convergence creating a near real time Model associated with what's going on there?

So that's quite exciting and I think we'll see a rise of digital twins not just with the aircraft engines and such Like we'll also see about digital twins modeling businesses modeling





Organizational processes like systems of business systems. Yeah, so I [00:21:00] can test process change against my business and then see what impact that might have.

of that is, I can de risk change. So when organizations have to do these new end to end business models, and they're thinking about what they want to change, they can test it. I wonder if they'd be able to put human complexity into that. Because, like, I can see how, I can see very quickly how you might get to sort of automated versions of process mapping, if you see what I mean.

Yeah. But like actually bringing the... You know, using something that actually modeled the human element would be, would be really fascinating. It is, yeah, and I think there'll be a race, uh, for the, the first to get there will get real competitive advantage. Yeah, I agree. So we're now seeing the tool sets that allow me to build these digital twins very, very quickly.

Who's going to grasp hold of it first and get their competitive advantage against the ability to go faster and test things earlier and, you know, drive pace and agility into the organization. And the Spare Station example that you used, is that a digital twin of the entire? space station, or is that just like sections of it at the moment?

It's more sections driving, uh, taking all the information and trying to model on the ground what's [00:22:00] going on so they can test different scenarios and things like that. But yeah, it's a very impressive example of what you can do very quickly with cloud and digital twins. Amazing. Very complex. Um, and I think that brings me on to theme three, which is around, we're seeing the continued rise and maturity of the cloud.

And that comes out a few things and we've seen a lot of maturity cycles with cloud, but that, that continues. Um, a good example is the more sector aligned solutions coming out like autonomous vehicles, connected cars, stuff like that. That's very, very cool. Um, but facing and rising to the business challenge in the end business.

So it's not just about technology. It's about understanding what those end to end outcomes need to be. Right. Which is actually very analogous to the sort of work you do Tom, right? And there's deep levels of automation. One of the, one of the absolutely cracking announcements I heard was you can go onto the Marketplace and zero touch deploy straight to production onto an EKS cluster, which I thought will put many, um, uh, at the fear of what that might be able to do.

But I was really appreciating the deep level of automation and, you know, capability that that starts. I think about end to end flow from a [00:23:00] want to buy that, uh, get it into production in moments. Literally in live. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Your FinOps teams are going to have to be right on top of that. Yeah, absolutely.

Some filled with dread. Yeah, yeah. Some filled with dread, others filled with joy. It's one of those when you read it, you go, that's going to create interesting discussions in the corporate world. What you can do. What? Again? Yeah, yeah. And you want me to do that? Yes. And the last for, um, the, sorry, the last theme is around optimization and performance.

So again, continuing to rise to the challenge of scale and performance. Yeah, and, and economic headwinds, presumably. Yeah, that's right. So we saw Adam talk this morning about deep optimization in cost, but no sacrifice in performance or scale. Yeah. And again, that points to the maturity point above, but there was some fantastic statistics that came out around when you do it properly, and you have to do it properly, the, the, the performance improvement you can get is, um, Fantastic.

The cost improvement you can get is fantastic and you can do it on massive scale. Exabytes



of data, billions of events processed in real time. And the aspect of doing it properly, of course, is like actually use the [00:24:00] technology to innovate. Don't expect to just do what you're doing today and doing it sort of faster.

Indeed. Cloud, it's the enabler, but if you don't work differently, think differently, like we heard from Tom earlier about the new, the working backwards process, then you're going to struggle to be able to use it to its full. Capability. So organizations really need to think about their internal mechanisms and how they're changing them to embrace all this stuff.

And it's there for the taking. And it's a continuous process, right? If you look at it, moving to the cloud is a one time event or one time event with many, many areas. But once you're there, what you want to do is you want to look at how can I optimize continuously what I'm using? And how can I bring in new services, new business projects and drive new, uh, new outcomes by using these new technologies, bringing costs further down.

Increasing performance, being able to scale, um, addressing also sorority, uh, issues on the way, uh, and improving security, right? So we have also a few announcements around security this week. Um, and one of them is really using AI actually [00:25:00] to, uh, detect, uh, uh, security incidents before they actually happen, right?

Using algorithms that are mathematically, uh... Yeah, predicting security. Exactly. Yeah, incredible that. Well, look, great conversation. Rob, keep up the roving reporting. We'll expect four more themes this afternoon. Yeah, brilliant. And Tom, thank you so much for your time today. That was a great conversation.

Thanks for that. Thanks to our producer Marcel, our sound and editing wizards, Ben and Louis, and of course, to all of our listeners.

We're on LinkedIn and X, Dave Chapman, Rob Kernahan, and Sjoukje Zaal. Feel free to follow or connect with us and please get in touch if you have any comments or ideas for the show. And of course, if you haven't already done that, rate and subscribe to our podcast.

See you in another reality next week.[00:26:00]

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