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CLOUD REALITIES

CRLIVE002

Re-Skilling your enterprise
with Phil Le-Brun

Capgemini's Cloud Realities podcast explores the exciting realities of today and tomorrow that can be unleashed by cloud.

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[00:00:00] All right, you good? You good, Rob? Yeah, let's go. Anybody got headphones? Hello, everyone. Very good to see you. Thanks for stopping by.

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 and I'm Rob Kernahan live at AWS reInvent 2022. It's a conversation show about what cloud driven transformation really means for businesses and humans.

I said on the last show, unfortunately, my normal co host is not with us at reInvent at the moment. But stepping into her shoes Is the roving reporter Rob Kernahan. Rob, you good? Yes, all good. Good to be back. What have you been doing since we last did one of these [00:01:00] things? So, I have been squirreling around the events trying to find the interesting themes and they're starting to emerge.

Right. And we've had some great sessions with AWS as well around various things. So, uh, yeah, we start to see a pattern now. So, we'll wait for tomorrow's keynotes as well and Thursday. But we can start to see, you know, there's a definite drive towards a particular, um, change that AWS is shaping up for.

Amazing. Look forward to hearing about that a bit later in the show. Cool. And how's the jet lag fogginess? Uh, it's still there, I think. Yeah, yeah, the haze is lifting though. It is, it is going up there. I think you are looking brighter. Slightly peakier. Yeah, yeah. Eyes are less bloodshot than they were this morning.

And joining us for this conversation today, I'm delighted to say we've got Phil Le Brun Enterprise Strategist from AWS. Welcome, Phil. How are you. Yeah, fantastic. Apart from my feet and my head and my eyes. What, uh, let me just check your shoes. Oh, you've got sensible shoes on. Trendy shoes. Digital shoes.

Digital shoes. What do they do? They just look digital. They take ten years, they take ten years off my face. [00:02:00] A face made for radio, thankfully. I thought you were going to say that they like track something, like your blood pressure and shit like that. But no, they just look digital. They just look cool. Very good.

Welcome. And how are you finding reInvent this year so far? Good. I mean, it's... It's good to be back to normal. Yes, uh, last year. Yesterday? Yes. No, last year. Well, we were just saying it feels like yesterday. Yeah. I mean, it, it, it was nice and intimate, but, uh, this is back to the full on craziness, which is re invent.

It, it really is. And I've heard, I don't know what the number is, but I've heard anywhere between 40, Yeah. I heard about 60, 000, 65, 000. It's that bang in the middle. Yeah. Yeah. But yeah, it was 20 last year, wasn't it? Yeah. So it's very sizable and noticeable. But it's ridiculous. I mean, given how many people are here, it's amazing how many people you bump into.

Oh, God, I haven't seen you for years. That is really true. And I think the dangerous bit is when you get stuck at a bar somewhere and then waves of people that you know end up coming through the bar and it becomes very difficult to leave. Oh, so[00:03:00]

that's the so today we're going to talk about what is actually an emergent theme, I think, in the conference and is actually one of the biggest challenges that we've got. In the industry today, which is about the talent crisis and most fundamentally about the whole subject of reskilling. So let's just start basically with some like perspective on that feel like, like, how are Amazon, how are Amazon perceiving The talent crisis and the skills issue and what's their perspective on it?

Yes, it's a really interesting time. So if you look at a lot of the industry research, there's about

a billion people, one billion people that need to be reskilled in the next ten years. Right. Um, and it's sort of analogous to the industrial revolution. New technology comes along and then people think, Oh, I need some new skills to go along with this.

So, I think we all have an accountability. To help reskill at skills, uh, reskill at scale. We've talked about, um, giving 29 million people cloud [00:04:00] skills over the next few years. Uh, we've got a lot going on with programs like restart and community programs and a whole host of investments in, uh, bringing people back to work, looking for different sources of skills.

Um, but it's, it's become a really common topic with the C suite. Uh, yeah, we talk a lot about digital transformation and I think most folks now get it. get what digital transformation looks like, but the big sticking point isn't technology. The technology is now there to do pretty much anything. It's, uh, how do I bring people along?

Do I need to go and hire a unicorn or even better a herd of unicorns? They're easy to find as well. Herds of unicorns, of course. They are. Yes. Yes. We, we have a couple in the UK, a new stock of, uh, but you look for that. We need a data scientist that's transformed three companies, uh, globally with a g p A of four.

Yeah. . Good luck with that. Yeah, exactly. So, so in your mind then, what, what's the, [00:05:00] what's the process of re-skilling and, and how do you crack that problem? That part? Part of the unicorn example you've just given there is everybody wants experience. And when you're in, when you're in an industry with technology that's actually only been around like at best for about 10 years, There just isn't that many people that have been on that many journeys, especially if you look at, say, if you look at cloud adoption, and depending on who you read, it's with, like, 30 percent of the world's workloads at this point, something like that.

You're optimistic today. Yeah, I think. It's been a long day. I'll bring a bit of, you know, pizzazz to this. We're throwing out pizzazz based stats. But the um, yeah, so let's just say it's 30 percent, but therefore there hasn't been that many people gone through it and there certainly hasn't been that many people who have gone through it and therefore are very experienced on multiple journeys.

So, so how do you crack that problem? Like if you're re skilling your existing people? How do you, how do you accelerate the maturity? It's uh, it's a [00:06:00] complex question. I think it starts with leadership. It was a long question. It was a very long question Let me give you a short answer. Yes The no, it is a I think it starts with leadership.

It's really interesting if you look at leadership So if you acknowledge digital transformations A team sport. It's about having skills in the right areas of the business to understand how to use technology, how to use data. 92 percent of data issues are still people, organization, and culture. So, if the leadership get that, then it becomes a whole lot easier.

But if you look at boards of directors, between 6 and 13 percent of individuals at board of directors level have enough technology knowledge to do their job. Not to do a technology job. About 25 percent of the C suites, even within the CIO range. If you haven't come up through an app dev type routes and you've run infrastructure or large contracts, you don't necessarily know what good looks like.

So firstly, it's understanding what can you do? What's the art of the possible with technology? What are those skills you need? [00:07:00] Secondly is you've got the people, typically you've got the people you need. They may not have the skills you need. So how do you create? A learning environment, so this isn't about sending people on training courses.

Yes, certifications are important, but 70 to 90 percent of learning is on the job. So how do you give people that opportunity to experiment and learn in the workplace, rather than just be seen as needing to perform? Right, and so, what have you seen in terms of good practice then, in other organizations, or perhaps in AWS itself, that sort of helps along that journey?

One of the things I love that we do is one of the leadership principles is learn to be curious. So hire, the half life of skills has gone from about 20 years in the 1960s to five years now, probably less for technology. Right. So if you accept the people you hire, the skills you hire today are probably going to be different to the skills you need in the future.

You need to hire people who want to learn, who want to be curious, who are asking those questions. That's what childhood mentality [00:08:00] we used to have. You know, why is the sky blue? No one ever answered that question for me, which really annoyed me, but asking those sort of questions. Is it to do with the brain?

I don't know. It's, it's actually to do with clouds. I look at that. So, um, or the cloud, the AWS cloud, um, the, um, so you, First, some of that is about hiring people who want to learn, creating an environment which encourages learning, which doesn't necessarily say, Hey, you're a leader. You must have the right answer.

You're good. I see this a lot in AWS. Good leaders say, I don't know. Can you explain that? Why do we do it that way? Well, it talks about quite a lot of leadership change. I think that where like leaders in certain organizations, so let's say more traditional organizations who are used to say leading from the front.

Um, and, and having to have the answer, and then in inverted commas, inspire the troops. Versus a leader that's kind of in a more supportive leadership position, whose job is to [00:09:00] create a safe space, to allow the sort of exploration and play, I like the word play, and, and play, and, and it's a bit of a cliche now, but the whole sort of failure and iteration element of, of development and learning.

And, what's going on there, do you think, in terms of, When you look at leaders across organizations, do you see many? sort of making the shift from the inspirational leader, the supportive leader, because actually it takes quite a lot of courage to go on that journey, I think. It does. I, I think we're seeing it more and yeah, during COVID, that was an accelerator, you know, less of the who's sitting outside my office door, who's bumped into me in the corridor, a democratization of access to leaders, um, more skip level communications, more, I don't think you lose the inspiration piece.

still think having that sense of purpose is critical. It's like the old story when JFK went to NASA in 1962 and saw the janitor. [00:10:00] If that janitor was in most organizations and was asked, what do you do? He or she would answer, well, I just clean the floor where the boss tells me to and then I go home and yeah, it's how dull instead.

What did the janitor say? I'll be put someone on the main. Oh, so why? So You still want that sense of purpose and give people the autonomy and mastery they need in the role. So, that piece is still critical. But I agree, it takes a bit of bravery for a leader to say, I may not have the answers, but it's sort of obvious they can't possibly have all of the answers in the world we live in.

Well, just that admission and the creation of the right... And the creation of the right conditions is going to lead to a far more, a far improved collaboration, nevermind a learning journey for the people around them, right? No, exactly. So, and it's, it's also up to leaders to demonstrate they are going on a learning journey too.

This isn't about you, the troops, you need to change, but I'm good. Yeah. It's about, I want to stay the way I've been for the last 20 years. Yeah. But I've seen some [00:11:00] improvement in how you've been performing recently. Right. And, uh, and so when, so Ask, like, chief executives and boards getting engaged in this conversation now, do you think?

Has it, has it percolated up the ranks enough for that to be a serious conversation? I mean, I, I, I probably perceive the pandemic helped with that journey too. It did, because I think there was a realization that, um, technology has a central role in communications. Call centers, for example. If I can't get into my data center, well, it doesn't matter if you're in the cloud.

So there was an element of that, but there's. It's also the reality is if you were hiring a chief marketing officer today, and that chief marketing officer said, well, I have, I have no idea about data. Would you hire him or her? No. I mean, how do you, you need to be able to understand data enough to do personalization, targeting, segmentation, CFO, the same.

Well, there is a, I think a great analogy for this is, is say financial skills. So [00:12:00] if you're, if you're a, if you're a leader or a manager in any organization and you can't do your budget, that would be, that would be a very serious issue you'd be having at that point in time. I think digital skills are getting to the point now where basically if you, if you aren't understanding the digital exploit for the job that you're doing, it's going to be a pretty severe gap in terms of keeping your organization competitive.

Well, if you, if you accept there's three massive competitive leaders who have an organization, how you spend your money, how people, what people do, and then how they use technology and data. So often we ask the C suite, how many of you are really bad leaders who hate finance? You can guess how many hands got it.

So why is it acceptable when the question is asked, how many of you understand technology for everyone to say, well, I don't. And you know, you unfortunately look at a lot of the executive MBA. Some of the top executive MBAs in the world, they're not teaching our next generation to be 21st century leaders.

They're teaching them to be 19th [00:13:00] century factory leaders. Yeah. In age leaders. So let's, let's maybe bring the conversation to a little bit of a conclusion for now by talking about some advice. So I guess, I guess there's, there's two levels to this. Uh, I think the first is what would you give advice to leaders?

And that, and that can be any level of strata of leader that you could, you want to choose. But, but maybe more importantly, I'm somebody who has worked in data centers on traditional technology for the last, um, you know, 25 years of my career. Like, where do I start? Well, if we start with, um, your first question, which I've already forgotten.

It was the leader one. If I was a leader, If, uh, what would the leader do? I mean, firstly. Accept that you're going to, if you're going to be a great organization that attracts and keeps great talent, you're going to have to be a great investor in people. So don't expect someone else to, uh, breed miracle data scientists or cloud engineers.

You've become really, really good at your onboarding process. Give [00:14:00] people the opportunity, the psychological safety in your organization to learn new skills, recognize those skills, lord those skills. Um, accept that. I wouldn't necessarily say... Um, praise failure, but recognize that during learning, you're going to make mistakes.

Um, and that's a good thing because it shows you're actually putting the boundary. But create that continual, um, desire to learn. So rather than this one time everyone's going to go on a TQM or a Six Sigma course. How do you learn all the time? Make it part of the day to day

job. Things like retrospectives as a leader, correction of errors, whatever those things are.

Send that message that you yourself are learning and you want your organization to learn. Um, but you asked a really interesting question. If you've been a brilliant data center engineer for 25 years, and then someone comes along and says, Hey Johnny, good news, we're moving to the cloud. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

The reaction is natural. It's fear, it's denial, it's, it's all that. Blocking, blocking the change. Absolutely. You have to address the what's in it for me. It's not that that person's [00:15:00] done a bad job They've actually done a brilliant job and because they've done a brilliant job your company's thrived But what got you here isn't going to get you there.

So what's in it for them? How does this? How's this gonna help them? I mean, there's many factors that where are they in their career? What do they want to do in the future? But you've got to paint that picture of a brighter upside with this change and give them the opportunity to To, to practice, to send them on certifications, put them through that cloud certifications, get them speaking the language, but then give them the opportunity in the workplace to practice those skills, move a small workload to the cloud.

Did you fail? You know, the old thing about think big, start small, learn quickly. Very good. Thank you, Rob. Bill. It's the hosting thing. And most importantly, remember your people's names. Total failure of leadership if you can't. On that note, we've got our [00:16:00] Robin Report affiliate. Thank you, George. So anyway, some great points about the experiential thing there.

I think the failure of leadership to communicate a compelling why should you change and why is it Time to change and then support people to get the skills. So really, really key points. And also technology is the new business. Yeah, so you should understand it as well as you do. You spreadsheet very much.

So yeah. So Rob, what have you found in the show? So a few more themes coming out for us today, but today has been a day of evolution and not revolution if you define it that way. So I've been track tracking what's going on, but we see a lot of growing maturity in the services, especially around controls and data, which goes back to the sovereignty point.

And the big blog that went out, uh, uh, two days ago, um, there have been some quite exciting things that came out around, uh, just walk out technology by Amazon. So the Amazon go type thing. Yeah, yeah. So the whole computer vision sensor data, frictionless shopping. Yeah. The idea of walking in and coming out without going through the checkout.

So that zero touch. And I think if you've ever done it, it is a bit scary the first time you go in, but hey, yeah. It is very good. It's [00:17:00] run through a series of cameras, right? Like hundreds of cameras installed in the shop, I think. Yeah, you scan as you go in, they know who you are, they've identified you, they track you around.

It is very good. In fact, it's been deployed in the UK and in sports stadiums in the US, where you get high volume crowds in at particular times. And actually, there was one stat, it's very impressive, sales went up by three times in one store because they went frictionless. So if you think about that from a retail perspective, how often have you turned up a store, seen a big queue and thought, No, but if you can walk in and come out, then that's better sales.

And did, to dig into that a little bit, and it might be that you haven't got the data, which is fair enough, but, like, was that people spending three times as much? No, it was… a higher volume of traffic? Higher footfall. Which is a great way because, you know, the big queues can turn you off if you want to get your t shirts or whatever.

What you could leap to is like, oh, people are just picking up more because it's sort of, you know, in inverted commas, feels free. It's actually that there was legitimately more people. It was higher footfall, which was really, really interesting. [00:18:00] Um, along with that... Power of data continues to rise. There's been a lot talked about in sector specifics and ML.

Uh, one really interesting one was AWS supply chain. So post COVID, when your supply chain got all wibbly wobbly and you didn't know what was going on, the ability to create supply chain data lake connected to your SAP system, get visibility, you can drive operational excellence, you can react. to the differing things that are going on within that.

And what's the release around that? Is that like a specific coordinated platform tool set? Yeah, so you get, uh, connects everything together, brings your data together, gives you visibility of what's going on, one place, the truth. If you go to many organizations that have this type of architecture, it can be, um, a bit like an explosionist spaghetti factory.

When you try and sort it out, where's my data? How do I get at it? This is a way of getting visibility of that data really. Quickly and being able to adapt your supply chain. So you don't get dead stock in warehouses and things like that. So that was quite cool. Um, the other one on that was Amazon SecurityLate, which is a similar sort of thing, but the sort of spots security issues before they become issues.

Bit like Minority Report of Security, where they can catch you before you've committed the crime type of thing, which I [00:19:00] thought was the same, you know, central... Area where they've got those precog precogs doing it, people who come and tap you on the shoulder and say, you're not releasing that to live today.

Sorry. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Um, and then there was a bit about remote working and V d I, uh, which continues to be a bit, a lot of people sit on the fence with v d I about the user experience, but again, Pushing that service higher for those who need to use it. Um, good use case around connecting to HPC, which is rising as well on the high, high forms compute, but yeah, yeah.

The VDI point, is that, is that, the same service that's been there for quite some time now, kind of repositioned, or is it like... A functionally uplifted service. So, better functional uplift, and more ways to connect. And better performance model around it. So we have to wait and see how that actually performs in, in live.

Because it always, um, splits the audience VDI. It does. But there was some good announcements about that earlier. Interesting, thanks Rob. Phil, what are your observations of the show so far? Any big themes sticking out for you? Uh, I am still annoyed that most hotel rooms don't have coffee. I mean, what is going on?

I mean, is it inflationary [00:20:00] pressure? I can get a tequila at two o'clock in the morning. I can't get a cappuccino. Um, it is problematic that I agree. I like, I've, I've struggled to find a, a coffee on the shore floor. 'cause we we're here working on this and you have to go out for a, you know, quite a big walk to get a coffee.

Oh, we've got a really nice barista upstairs. Uh, can you get personal access to that? Uh, I've got personal access. Yes. , look at that. You flaunt in your perks. , you weren't invited to flaunt in your perks. But I agree. There's a lot of evolutionary change, which is good. Cause I think the thing that's still, you know, go back to data, there's still a lot of fundamental issues with businesses getting value from the data they have.

How do we make the technology even easier to get rid of any technology, perceived technology barriers. So you can really focus on things like a quick site queue. I mean, think

natural language, querying of data. You're taking like your Amazon go, example, how do you take the friction out of business intelligence?

I know it is, it, it, it means that the technology [00:21:00] becomes more accessible to those who are picking up the skills, but it makes it easy to interact. And when you get that business curiosity and they're able to interact with the technology directly, you get more powerful results. So these are all good abstraction steps that just make it easier to get value.

Alright. Very good. Thanks, Rob. No problem. Setting a bar here for next time, do you think? Uh, maybe. We'll see. You'll have to judge me by the end of the week. It's gonna dwindle through the week, do you reckon? As the enthusiasm runs down. We'll see. We'll see. It's a long way to go yet. Well, thanks very much, man.

Hey look, Phil, we like to end each show by asking people about what they're most excited to do next. What are you most excited to do next, man? I hate to say go home, because it will be nice to see my wife again. That could be misheard. Yeah, but it's, no, I love, I love being here. My feet are sore already, and it's only day one, day two?

What day is it? It's actually day one. This is like, there was build day yesterday, pretty much, with a big keynote in the evening. So this is day one, unbelievably. No, I'm, I'm looking forward to the, uh, to [00:22:00] Schwammies. It's, uh. Keynotes. Oh yeah. Tomorrow. Yeah. That's always really interesting. Particularly last year we saw a lot of democratization of access to machine learning.

Going back to education, right? How do you put the power of technology into the hands of people who aren't traditionally technologists? Things like Amazon, SageMaker, canvas. I think we're gonna see more and more of that over time. So I'm really interested to see what he's, uh, he's cooking up. Alright. No previews you any previews?

Uh, I'd have to shoot you . Exactly. You probably don't want that car, but No, no previews, not on the expo floor anymore. Yeah, no, that would be. But look, look, thanks a lot for your time. Anytime. It's always a pleasure to talk to you Phil and get your insights, so thanks very much indeed. Good to see you. Rob, always a pleasure.

Thank you very much Thanks to our producer Marcel, our sound and editing wizards, Ben and Louis, and of course, to all of our listeners.

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See you in another reality next week.[00:23:00]

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