Running Scientific Workflow Applications on the Amazon EC2 Cloud

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Should I Use The Cloud?

- **The answer is….it depends on your application and use case.**
- **Recommended best practice: Always perform a cost-benefit analysis to identify the most cost-effective processing and data storage strategy because Amazon itemizes charges for processing, data transfer and data storage.**
- Amazon offers the best value for compute- and memory-bound applications. However, data storage, and especially data transfer costs, exceed processing costs for data-intensive applications.
- If you need the best performance, HPCs with parallel file systems and high-speed networks are a better choice than Amazon for data-intensive applications.

Where Can I Learn More?

- This poster is based on the paper **Scientific Workflow Applications on Amazon EC2** by G. Juve, E. Deelman, K. Vahi, B. Berriman, P. Berman, and P. Maechling, published by the Cloud Computing Workshop in Conjunction with e-Science 2009 (Oxford, UK). http://arxiv.org/abs/1005.2718
- **Cloud Computing in the Age of Data-Intensive Science**, by G. B. Berriman, E. Deelman and G. Juve. An SPIE Newsroom Release (May 25, 2010) http://spie.org/x40451.xml?highlight=x2418&ArticleID=x40451
- Visit Bruce Berriman's blog, "Astronomy Computing Today," at http://astrocompute.wordpress.com

What Are Our Goals?

The study was designed to answer the question: **How useful is cloud computing for scientific workflow applications?**

Workflow applications are loosely coupled applications in which the output files from one component become the input to the next.

There were three goals:

1. Conduct an experimental study of the performance **of three workflows** with different I/O, memory and CPU requirements on a commercial cloud.
2. Compare the performance of cloud resources with the performance of a typical High Performance Cluster (HPC). The cloud uses **commodity hardware and virtualization** and HPCs use **parallel file systems and fast networks**.
3. Provide an **analysis of the various costs** associated with running workflows on a commercial cloud.

We chose Amazon EC2 as the cloud provider and the NCSA Abe cluster as a high-performance cluster.

http://www.ncsa.illinois.edu/UserInfo/Resources/Hardware/Intel64Cluster

http://aws.amazon.com/ec2/

Computing Resources

Type	Arch	CPU	Cores	Memory	Network	Storage	Price
Amazon EC2							
m1.small	32-bit	2.0-2.6 GHz Opteron	1-2	1.7 GB	1-Gbps Ethernet	Local	$0.10/hr
m1.large	64-bit	2.0-2.6 GHz Opteron	2	7.5 GB	1-Gbps Ethernet	Local	$0.40/hr
m1.xlarge	64-bit	2.0-2.6 GHz Opteron	4	15 GB	1-Gbps Ethernet	Local	$0.80/hr
c1.medium	32-bit	2.33-2.66 GHz Xeon	2	1.7 GB	1-Gbps Ethernet	Local	$0.20/hr
c1.xlarge	64-bit	2.0-2.66 GHz Xeon	8	7.5 GB	1-Gbps Ethernet	Local	$0.80/hr
Abe							
abe.local	64-bit	2.33 GHz Xeon	8	8 GB	10-Gbps InfiniBand	Local	…
abe.lustre	64-bit	2.33 GHz Xeon	8	8 GB	10-Gbps InfiniBand	Lustre	…

Processor and Network Specifications

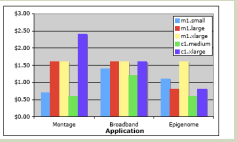
Processors and OS

- Amazon offers a wide selection of processors. Our choices reflect the range of options to look at cost vs. performance.
- Ran Linux Red Hat Enterprise with VMware
- *c1.xlarge* and *abe.local* are equivalent – estimate overhead due to virtualization
- *abe.lustre* and *abe.local* differ only in file system

Networks and File Systems

- HPC systems use high-performance network and parallel file systems.
- Amazon EC2 uses off-the-shelf hardware.
- Ran all processes on single, multi-core nodes. Used local and parallel file system on Abe.

Amazon Processing Costs



Montage:

- Clear trade-off between performance and cost.
- **Most powerful processor *c1.xlarge* offers 3x the performance of *m1.small* – but at 5x the cost.**
- Most cost-effective processor is *c1.medium* – 20% performance loss over *m1.small*, but 5x lower cost.

Broadband and Epigenome:

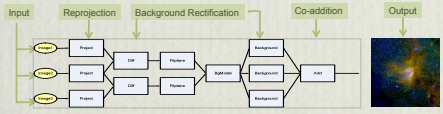
- No reason to choose anything other than the most powerful machines.

The Applications

Montage (http://montage.ipac.caltech.edu) creates science-grade image mosaics from multiple input images.

Broadband simulates and compares seismograms from earthquake simulation codes.

Epigenome maps short DNA segments collected using high-throughput gene sequencing machines to a reference genome.



Montage Workflow

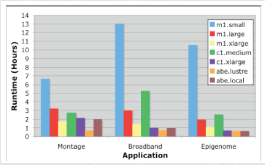
Application	I/O	Memory	CPU
Montage	High	Low	Low
Broadband	Medium	High	Medium
Epigenome	Low	Medium	High

Resource Usage of the Three Workflow Applications

Application	Workflow	# Tasks	Input	Output
Montage	8 deg. sq. mosaic of M16, 2MASS K-band	10,429	4.2 GB	7.9 GB
Broadband	4 earthquake sources, 5 sites	320	6 GB	160 MB
Epigenome	Maps DNA sequences to ref. chromosome 21	81	1.8 GB	300 MB

Workflow Specifications for this Study

Runtime Performance



Montage (I/O-Bound)

- Fastest on those machines with the most core and largest memory: *m1.xlarge, c1.xlarge, abe.lustre, and abe.local*. Linux kernel uses the available memory for the file system buffer cache, and this reduces time waiting for I/O.
- The parallel file system on *abe.lustre* offers a big performance advantage of x3 for I/O-bound systems. Cloud providers would need to offer parallel file systems and high-speed networks to compete with the HPC.
- Virtualization overhead on Amazon <8%

Broadband (Memory-Bound)

- Lower I/O requirements – little difference between *abe.lustre* and *abe.local*.
- Amazon can achieve same performance as Abe if there is more than 1 GB memory per core. available
- Poor performance on *c1.medium* – only 1.7 GB of memory. Cores may sit idle to prevent system running out of memory.
- Virtualization overhead on Amazon is very small.

Epigenome (CPU-Bound)

- *c1.xlarge*, *abe.lustre* and *abe.local* give best performance – they are the three most powerful machines (64-bit, 2.3-2.6 GHz)
- The parallel file system on *abe.lustre* offers little performance advantage.
- Virtualization overhead on Amazon is roughly 10% -- the application competes for CPU with the OS.

Data Storage Costs

Data Storage Costs

- Amazon charges for storing Virtual Machines (VM) and user's applications in local disk
- It also charges for storing data in network-attached Elastic Block Storage (EBS).

Item	Charges ($)
Storage of VMs on local disk	$0.15 GB/Month
Storage of data in EBS disk	$0.10 GB/Month

Storage Volumes

Application	Input (GB)	Output (GB)	Logs (MB)
Montage	4.2	7.9	40
Broadband	4.1	0.16	5.5
Epigenome	1.8	0.3	3.3

Storage Costs

Application	Data ($)	VM ($)	Monthly Cost ($)
Montage	$0.95	$0.12	$1.07
Broadband	$0.02	$0.10	$0.12
Epigenome	$0.22	$0.10	$0.32

Montage Storage Costs Exceed Most Cost-Effective Processor Costs

Data Transfer Costs

Transfer Rates

- Amazon charges different rates for transferring data into the cloud and back out again.
- Transfer-out costs are the higher of the two.

Operation	Cost ($)
Transfer In	$0.10/GB
Transfer Out	$0.17/GB

Transfer Costs

- For Montage, the **cost to transfer data out of the cloud is higher** than monthly storage and processing costs.
- For Broadband and Epigenome, **processing incurs the biggest costs**.

Application	Input	Output	Logs	Total
Montage	$0.42	$1.32	<$0.01	$1.75
Broadband	$0.40	$0.03	<$0.01	$0.43
Epigenome	$0.18	$0.05	<0.01	$0.23