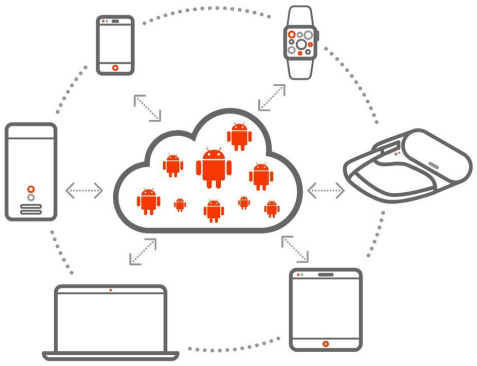
Canonical sings praises for platform putting Android in the cloud

23 January 2020, by Nancy Cohen



Credit: Canonical

Android is all up in the clouds, just where Canonical thought it could be, in working up its service called Anbox Cloud, announced earlier this week.

The result: you can host Android apps in the cloud. The service will work on x86-based architectures and ARM-based architectures.

Canonical, the publisher of Ubuntu, the Linux distribution, is going after the business crowd with this introduction. Frederic Lardinois in TechCrunch: "Anbox runs the full Android system in a container, which in turn allows you to run Android application on any Linux-based platform...it allows enterprises to offload mobile workloads to the cloud and then stream those applications to their employees' mobile devices."

The idea, pure and simple, is that enterprises, as Paul Hill in Neowin explained, get to distribute Android apps via the cloud in a container environment. Businesses that will use the service will know that the app is secure and independent of a device's capabilities, he said.

As *TechCrunch*'s Lardinois put it, "On Anbox Cloud, Android becomes the guest operating system that runs containerized applications."

Tuesday's announcement from Canonical said its platform enabled enterprises to distribute applications from the cloud, and enterprises and service providers to deliver mobile applications "at scale, more securely and independently of a device's capabilities."

This would be a suitable way to present cloud gaming, enterprise workplace applications, software testing and mobile device virtualization. Stephan Fabel, director of product at Canonical, said, "Enterprises are now empowered to deliver high performance, high density computing to any device remotely, with reduced power consumption and in an economical manner."

Meanwhile, *TechCrunch* noticed that "Outside of the enterprise, one of the use cases that Canonical seems to be focusing on is gaming and game streaming."

Canonical was promoting the advantages of Anbox Cloud for graphic and memory-intensive mobile games. These can "be scaled to vast amounts of users while retaining the responsiveness and ultra-low latency demanded by gamers." Anbox Cloud could create "an on-demand experience" for gamers.

Brad Linder in *Liliputing* discussed, in plain talk, why this was an improvement over a person running an app or game on the phone. "Theoretically this opens the door to running apps and games on any internet-connected device at any time, regardless of whether it's a $100 smartphone or a $3000 laptop—because the operating system and processing power are all hosted in the cloud, which means it's almost irrelevant how much processing power the device you're using has."

The service is deployable on private and public clouds; Canonical is specifically partnering with specialist Packet;

Packet figures into this announcement as a cloud computing infrastructure provider. Packet co-founder Jacob Smith made the point that "As small, low-powered devices inundate our world, offloading applications to nearby cloud servers opens up a huge number of opportunities for efficiency." He said Packet was excited to support the Anbox team "as they grow alongside the worldwide rollout of 5G."

(Lardoinois remarked that Canonical was "betting on 5G to enable more use cases, less because of the available bandwidth but more because of the low latencies it enables.")

Forbes contributor Adrian Bridgwater remarked that software developers could look forward to a platform that gives more control over performance and infrastructure costs:

"By containerizing the task of running what could be a highly complex piece of software in a cloud datacenter, Anbox Cloud is capable of creating some fairly meaty backend power, but then delivering it to the device, independently of a device's capabilities. Yes users will still have to make a connection from their devices, but this way there has been an 'offload' of the compute (i.e. processing), data storage and energy-intensive requirements that the app needs, so that that part happens at the back end."

Lardinois provided some background on Anbox. As an open-source project it came out of Canonical and the wider Ubuntu ecosystem. Anbox was launched in 2017 by Canonical engineer Simon Fels.

Canonical said the Anbox Cloud is built "on a range of Canonical technologies and runs Android on the Ubuntu 18.04 LTS kernel."

Softpedia's Marius Nestor walked readers through Anbox technology, "a free and open-source compatibility layer that allows Android apps to run on GNU/Linux distributions." Anbox Cloud uses Canonical's MAAS (Metal as a Service) and Juju.

More information:
ubuntu.com/blog/canonical-intr … android-in-the-cloud

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