

Microsoft debuts portable data center to bring cloud computing to remote environments

21 October 2020, by Bob Yirka



Credit: Microsoft

Microsoft Corporation has announced on its website the development of a portable data center that can be used to bring cloud computing to remote environments. In their announcement, Microsoft describes their Azure Modular Datacenter (MDC) as a solution for customers who need cloud computing capabilities in both hybrid and challenging environments. They note also that many places around the world still face immense hurdles in connecting to internet services. They claim their new systems will help to overcome those problems in such regions.

Microsoft Azure is a cloud computing service that allows customers to build, test, deploy and manage cloud-based applications. With MDC, Microsoft hopes to expand its [customer](#) base by offering the same types of services to users who may reside in challenging environments.

Each MDC is essentially an environmentally controlled tractor-trailer-sized box filled with servers, other computer hardware and the [electronic components](#) needed for connecting to

the internet, whether directly through cable or fiber or via [satellite](#) access. For the latter option, Microsoft has partnered with several satellite operators. Each MDC is also mobile. Each of the boxes is also ruggedized, making them suitable for use in areas with harsh weather. Each also has shielding to prevent radio frequency interference or eavesdropping. The MDC units are modular, conferring the ability to connect as many units as are needed at any given location.

Microsoft also notes that one of the first major collaborators for its MDC systems is SpaceX's Starlink satellite broadband project. The goal is to create linkages between MDCs and Starlink for customers who could benefit from such services. Another of its collaborators is SES, a company with multiple satellites in medium-Earth orbits. Microsoft has been testing its Azure systems with SES simulated fiber connection systems. These systems, they note, can switch automatically between satellite connections and ground-based fiber systems if fiber access is lost. They note also that their MDC systems can switch from one satellite to another if problems arise.

Microsoft also notes that in addition to providing internet access, MDC customers would also have access to Azure apps, giving them low-latency cloud-based computing capabilities.



Credit: Microsoft

More information: Introducing the Microsoft Azure modular datacenter: [azure.microsoft.com/en-us/blog ... -modular-datacenter/](https://azure.microsoft.com/en-us/blog/...-modular-datacenter/)

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