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Virtual Environments Testing as a Cloud service: A Methodology for Protecting and Securing Virtual Infrastructures

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ABSTRACT Testing is a vital component of the system development life cycle. As information systems infrastructure move from native computing to cloud-based and virtualized platforms, it becomes necessary to evaluate their effectiveness to ensure completion of organisational goals. However, the complexity and scale of virtualized environments makes this process difficult. Additionally, inherited and novel issues further complicate this process, while relatively high costs can be constraining. Enabling service driven environments to provide this evaluation is therefore beneficial for both providers and users. No such complete service offering currently exists. This paper is therefore aimed to benefit industry and academia involved in areas involved with cloud-based testing of virtualized software and its environments. A review of current literature highlights a number of challenges in the domain. An analysis of the challenges aided in deriving requirements for developing a servitisation framework for Virtual Infrastructure Testing as a Service. It is anticipated that this framework can further feedback into developing solutions to the aforementioned challenges. An evaluation of a real-world organisation's servitization requirements case scenario indicates that the proposed framework provides potential solutions for associated use cases.

INDEX TERMS Testing, Servitisation, Virtual Environment, Utility Computing, Cloud Computing, Security, Testing as Service.

I. INTRODUCTION

VIRTUALIZATION technologies are foundational components for a wide variety of computing scenarios. Initially employed in numerous roles for enhancement of operating systems, virtualisation has now grown to enable full representation of computing hardware at near native speed [1]. The aggregation of differing forms of virtualisation has allowed the construction of complete information system environments and through which has enabled the paradigm of cloud computing. Whether cloud-based or otherwise, virtual system environments afford a variety of benefits over information systems constructed directly on native hardware. As well as ease of general system construction and management, economy is often seen as a main driving factor for adoption of virtualised environments, often at the expense of mild performance degradation [1].

As with their traditional counterparts, it is essential that these systems operate within their given constraints,in line with the goals of their governing organisation. Whilst the criteria to be assessed will typically remain the same, the methods for assessing vary. In some ways, it has become easier due to the added capabilities of automating previously physical tasks. Nonetheless, the complexity and cost of the environments generates new challenges for the evaluation of these virtual ecosystems [2].

In addition to the aforementioned factors, another driving factor for this work is from the migration to cloud-computing, which has given way to a plethora of computing-based services. With its foundation of virtualisation technologies, it seems a suitable choice to provide evaluation services for virtualised environments. However research has revealed that there is no complete offering in this area, with complexity of the environments and testing process appearing to be a dividing problem [3]. Therefore to further enable the development of cloud-based virtual infrastructure testing, this paper provides a survey of works in this area, foremost to further understand the challenges associated with the development of cloud-based testing environments. In order to drive development in this area, a framework for servitisation of testing within cloud-based environments is derived and presented.

The focus of this paper can therefore be considered as an intersection between the following. The increased uptake of virtual environments has generated a novel necessity for their performance evaluation, with the addition of the move to utility based cloud-computing, which has servitised most aspects of information system offerings; ensures the integration of virtual environment evaluation and cloud-based services is inevitable. Such a cloud-based virtual infrastructure testing service is beneficial not just as a lucrative offering for cloud providers, but also to recursively ensure that cloud environments are operating effectively and efficiently. Table 1 below provides a summary of the benefits of cloud-based testing.

As one primary factor for driving cloud adoption is to increase economy, ensuring then that the cloud service is economical for all involved actors is an undeniable priority. When performing a survey of the aforementioned similar and relevant areas: cloud based-servitisation, cloud-based testing and virtual environment evaluation, a number of issues become apparent. Therefore, this paper focuses upon the challenges seen at this intersection, the analysis of which then helps to drive forward virtual infrastructure testing as a service through a thorough derivation of challenges and their inter dependencies through which has facilitated the development of a framework for a more complete integration of software testing, cloud-based testing, virtual environment evaluation and servitisation areas. The foregoing are important considering that an increasing number of organizations are taking advantage of virtualized environments to involve their stakeholders and clients in product development and support activities [4]. However, the complexity of VE, and modern VEs in particular, presents major challenges to testing activities. Modern VE need to be extensively tested before being implemented, and before changes can be rolled out into live environments. In spite of the foregoing, It is expensive & impracticable for most customers to maintain sufficient resources to carry out proper testing. Nevertheless, with an increased availability of computational power and innovative technologies, VE testing just like software testing, aims to evaluate the quality of a VE environment [5]. Due to the variety of virtualization methods, it is necessary to evaluate the reliability, availability, consistency, transparency, and performance of VE. VE testing is particularly pertinent in a scenario where a VE hosts a high performance computing application, to ascertain if a VE can meet the high performance requirements of a (HPC) [6]. Testing is a vital process, and hugely linked to the cost of developing and maintaining software or infrastructure [7]. It is primarily aimed to raise confidence about a system by measuring if the behaviours of the intended and actual system differ [8]. For instance, software testing is viewed synonymous with validation testing, and is primarily conducted to discover errors that exist in software as a result of inadvertent poor design and construction [9]. We refer the reader to [9] for detailed information. In distributed software environments with integrated platforms, the need for reliable, scalable and fast service delivery makes it is not uncommon that performance testing should include the evaluation of latency, scalability, and throughput [10]. Nonetheless, a line of argument suggests that performance testing is underdeveloped, with no standard recommendations on how to perform it [11].

A thorough critical review of literature and industrial practice on virtual infrastructure testing (Section 2) show that many of the challenges (Section 3.1) in current cloud-based testing solutions are a result of the cloud environment, the complex nature of the environments to be tested, and the testing process itself. Furthermore, we observe that cloud-based virtual infrastructure testing as a service (Section 3) is a niche market from both an academia and industry perspective. As such, to the best of our knowledge, the collective entirety of this paper is the first of its form.

In order to successfully drive solutions for cloud-based virtual infrastructure testing as a service forward, we propose a framework for cloud-based virtual infrastructure testing servitization (Section 3.3). Foremost, we derive requirements for a service through an analysis of the challenges noted earlier, leading to framework servitization process requirements from other industries. We finally map the requirements to the aforementioned process, in line with commonly used guidelines for producing a service (Section 3.4). In the analysis (Section 3.5), we evaluate our framework based on a real-world organisation's servitization requirements.

II. CLOUD BASED VIRTUAL INFRASTRUCTURE TESTING

In this section, we analyse academic research and industrial development and practices in cloud testing in order understand the current state of the art in various systems. The results of an examination into prior research attempts will facilitate greater insight into any gap area, and provide a basis for framework development efforts.

- **Testing virtualised environments** Reviewing the work within this area was important in order to understand the processes that were used to evaluate and test virtual environments.
- **The cloud as a testing environment** Whilst this work does not focus on testing virtualized environments, it provides an insight into the fundamentals of cloud management when leveraged for software testing.
- **Testing cloud environments** Cloud environments are inherently complex due to their large scale, distributed nature and dynamic structure. Literature in this area elaborated on the challenges of testing complex virtualized environments.

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TABLE 1. Advantages of Cloud-Based Testing

Cloud-based testing	Benefits of Cloud-based testing
Leverages Cloud computing infrastructure for testing environments and activities	Ability to create multiple scalable, on-demand cloud environments and test configurations to accelerate development and testing cycles
Ability to simulate web-traffic and production style network state at minimal costs for testing purposes is a strong selling point	Ability to closely replicate live production environments for better and more accurate testing process
Entails quick and easy auto-provisioning of computing resources and infrastructure which can include virtual resources	Increase test coverage, test cycles and increase bug resolution cycles
On-demand test execution of test cases	More flexibility/agility to meet varying business testing demands
Testing can be done via the internet connection as a service at any time amongst a geographically dispersed team	Enable easy collaboration for multiple product and release teams, including secure, limited access for contract or off-shore test teams. Share bug snapshots with remote development and testing teams.
Can be less expensive for large-scale software testing projects over any length of time due to the Cloud pay-per-use pricing	Create isolated test environments for broad range of OS, database, browser, and application
Ease of scaling, saving or recreating test environments for faster defect resolution and faster time to market for products	Easily recreate use cases. Enable rapid defect resolution by capturing the entire state (memory, network settings, and disk) of a multi-machine configuration and saving as templates

A. STATE OF THE ART

A recent study of Market Research Media forecasts that U.S. government spending on cloud computing is entering an explosive growth phase in the coming years, with expenditure surpassing seven billion dollars by 2015 [3]. Logically, this forecast has a direct effect on related cloud-based services. The success of Amazon, eBay and Google has led to the rise of cloud computing as a new, proven architecture of how the traditional datacentre is built and managed. Indeed, recent publications from various respectable organisations provide encouraging forecasts, and to a greater extent, reason for optimism. For instance, International Data CorporationâĂŹs (IDC) suggestion that worldwide spending on public cloud services reached $47.4 billion in 2013, increasing to over $107 billion in 2017 [6]. Similarly, predictions by Gartner estimating the cloud service market would reach $150.1 billion in 2013 [4] insinuates that there is vast scope for businesses and future developments in the cloud service market.

Since the advent of cloud computing, telecommunications and web-based applications are particularly argued as primed for online testing [12]. This notion is grounded in the logic that, with Software as a Service, online applications will better be tested in their host environments [12]. When reviewing the body of work on cloud-based virtual software testing, there are a number of sub-fields which may be considered as each one contributes to the general area. This body includes software test suites which leverage the cloud, testing of cloud applications at each layer of the cloud (Infrastructure, Platform and Software), testing of virtualized environments (in a non-cloud setting), software which provides testing as a cloud service and a general evaluation of experiences used in testing virtualized environments, including further research directions.

Recent years have witnessed an increase in the demand for thin client technology [20][21][22]. Thin Client computing is a way of maintaining computational services at a reduced total cost of ownership (TCO). Along similar lines, there are efforts from academia as well as industry key players towards research and development of cloud-based testing solutions for applications, web sites, and other services. However, there are no fully developed cloud-based service offerings for testing virtual environments [12] [1]. As illustrated in Table and Table , the closest competitors in this area are Fujitsu, VMware and IBM who offer very limited and on-premise solutions for testing, but so far none of them offer a Cloud-based infrastructure for testing VE. Similarly, there are other solutions such as LoginVSI and SwiftTest for testing Virtual Infrastructures, but they are not Cloud-integrated & are also highly costly, complex and cumbersome to use.

The complexity of modern VE presents major challenges to testing activities. These systems need to be extensively tested before being implemented and before changes can be rolled out to live environments. It is expensive and impracticable for most customers to maintain sufficient resources to carry out proper testing. While it seems attractive for users to build their testing infrastructures in the Cloud using Amazon or Rackspace, current testing methods tend to involve building the testing infrastructure in old hardware on-premise. Neither Amazon nor Rackspace provides off-the-shelf capability of testing VE. Also, for SMEs and even for larger organisations, using Amazon services or on-premise, both prove cumbersome, due to associated costs, resources & required expertise & administrative overhead. In both options, users will need to procure, install and configure complex testing tools. Invariably they fail to meet their objectives because of:

1) insufficient resources to create and maintain a test infra-structure regardless of the platform being used
2) the cost, complexity and inflexibility of available testing tools
3) inflexibility of the Cloud Provider to meet customers changing requirements.

A summary of the academic literature surveyed is presented in Table 2. An analysis of the literature shows minimal work in cloud-based software testing, non-cloud based testing of cloud environments, and non-cloud based perfor-

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TABLE 2. Literature in Virtual Infrastructure Testing as a Service

Authors	Description	Type
Kao et al 2014 [13]	Design of a component based system use for testing software in cloud environments. Example: Web Application	Cloud-based software testing
Riungu et al 2010 [14]	Qualitative study where managers were interviewed on their opinions of software	
Hanawa et al 2010 [15]	Leverages full cloud features using eucalyptus to perform automated testing with an emphasis on fault injection in distributed software environment.	
Robinson and Ragusa 2011 [3]	A method referred to as (testing the cloud) from an infrastructure point of view.	
Riungu et al 2010 [2]	Provides a brief overview of testing software within cloud environments via interviewees from eleven different organizations.	
Ciortea 2010 [16]	STaaS utilising symbolic execution for increased performance.	
King and Ganti 2010 [17]	Enabling cloud software environments to perform ATS in tandem with Test-support-as-a-Service to provide developers with comprehensive.	Non cloud-based testing of cloud environments
IBM 2011 [18]	A hybrid simulation and emulation method for testing large cloud environments.	
Gao et al. 2011 [19]	Formal models and approaches to evaluating SaaS performance and scalability.	
Shi et al 2015 [20]	CloudTB: A quick and reliable testbed for virtual machine based cloud computing systems.	
Lynch, Cerqueus and Thorpe 2013 [21]	Evaluates novel tools and methodologies developed for testing IBM SaaS applications.	
Tomasson 2013 [22]	Evaluated testing a cloud application on the amazon ec2 platform.	
Lim et al 2013 [23]	Assessing the performance of a data analytics program during resource changes $sizing$	Non-cloud based performance testing of virtual environments
Ahmad et al 2003	Provides methods for quantification of disk I/O as a metric for VM performance	
MasâĂŹud, Yaacob, and Ahmad 2006 [24]	Network I/O evaluation of a VM based IDS.	
Al Jabry, Liu, Zhu, and Panneerselvam, 2014 [25]	A Type 2 hypervisor performance comparison.	
Martinovic, Balen, and S Rimac-Drlje, 2010 [26]	A performance comparison when adjusting the underlying OS.	
Chi, Qian and Lu 2014 [27]	Numerous VM collocation performance degredation effects.	
Zhu, Zhu and Agrawal 2010 [28]	KCCA VM performance model for power optimisation	
Koh et al 2007 [29]	Application type performance analysis	
Hashimoto and Aida 2012 [30]	Collocation performance degradation within HPC applications	
Pu et al 2010 [31]	Shows degredation of performance during Collocation due to disk and network I/O	
Tickoo et al 2010 [32]	Describes numerous challenges to providing accurate performance to virtual machines.	
Kundu et al 2012 [33]	Machine learning performance models.	
Soundararajan et al 2014 [34]	Multi-layer VM Benchmarking	
Ye et al 2014 2014 [35]	A full featured virtualisation benchmarking suite.	

mance testing of virtual environments. This is a logical fining based on the emergence of cloud computing no more than past ten years ago. However, out of these testing categories, testing Virtual Environments seems to be the one area which has received less attention, although, we acknowledged in Table 2, some related contributions, but almost all of which cover the area of performance related evaluation of different virtualisation configurations and performance modelling and prediction. On the other hand, Google trends suggests a rising interest in VDI, nonetheless, with recent indication of a drop in interest. Some views have attributed the drop of interest to the the lack of adequate testing and support tools to enable accurate planning and deployment of VDI environments more specifically, to meet customersâĂŹ requirements. A summary of market literature is provided in Table 3.

B. ANALYSIS OF STATE OF THE ART

An analysis of both academic and industry offerings in the area of cloud-based virtual environment testing as a service has shown that there is no application, environment or service offering which provides complete coverage of the required non-functional and functional testing types and that the area of evaluating cloud environments and using the cloud as a testing environment is under-researched.

Thus, we suggest the existence of a gap area within both academia and industry in offering a full cloud-based service for testing virtualised environments. We put forward the claim that, servitization of cloud-based virtual infrastructure testing will ensure that software quality assurance is continuously delivered to customers in a cost-effective manner.

While the idea behind servitization is to devise a system that fits a competitive business model based on value, and

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TABLE 3. Market Analysis of Key commercial Players in testing for virtual and non-virtual environments

V:Virtual Environments; NV: Non-Virtual Environments; C: Cloud-based; NC: non-Cloud-based; X: Cross-platform

Testing components	UTest		Sauce Labs		Skytap		HP		IBM		SOASTA		Fujitsu		Microsoft		Sogetti		Login VSI		Oracle		VMware	
Non-Functional Testing	V	NV	V	NV	V	NV	V	NV	V	NV	V	NV	V	NV	V	NV	V	NV	V	NV	V	NV	V	NV
Security Testing		C				C-X		C-X		C-X		C-X			NC	C-X		C	NC				NC	
Performance Testing		C		C-X		C-X	NC	C-X	NC	C-X		C-X	NC	NC	NC	C-X		C	NC		NC	C-X	NC	
Load Testing		C					NC	C-X	NC	C-X		C-X	NC		NC	C-X			NC		NC	C-X	NC	
Usability Testing		C					NC	C-X	NC				NC		NC	C-X		C	NC		NC	C-X	NC	
Compatibility Testing		C		C-X		C-X		C-X	NC			C-X	NC		NC	C-X		C			NC	C-X	NC	
Compliance Testing								C-X		C-X												C-X		
Functionality Testing		C		C-X		C-X	NC	C-X	NC	C-X		C-X	NC		NC	C-X		C	NC			C-X	NC	
Interoperability Testing		C		C-X				C-X								C-X		C						
Localization Testing		C				C-X																		
Maintainability Testing				C-X																		C-X		
Stress Testing		C				C-X		C-X	NC				NC		NC	C-X			NC			C-X	NC	
Scalability Testing				C-X		C-X		C-X				C-X	NC		NC	C-X			NC		NC	C-X		
Recovery Testing								C-X																
Test automation				C-X		C-X		C-X	NC	C-X		C-X	NC	NC		C-X		C	NC		NC	C-X		
Test management				C-X	NC	C-X		C-X	NC	C-X						C-X		C	NC			C-X		
Functional Testing	V	NV	V	NV	V	NV	V	NV	V	NV	V	NV	V	NV	V	NV	V	NV	V	NV	V	NV	V	NV
Unit Testing		C		C-X		C-X		C-X		C-X		C-X		NC		C-X		C				C-X		
Smoke/Sanity Testing		C		C-X		C-X												C						
Integration Testing		C		C-X		C-X		C-X		C-X		C-X		NC		C-X		C				C-X		
Interface/Usability Testing		C		C-X		C-X		C-X		C-X		C-X	NC	NC		C-X		C	NC			C-X	NC	
System Testing		C		C-X		C-X		C-X		C-X		C-X				C-X		C						
Regression Testing		C		C-X		C-X		C-X		C-X		C-X				C-X		C				C-X		
UAT		C		C-X		C-X		C-X		C-X		C-X		NC		C-X		C						

provides propositions for customers, based on benefits and tread-off, [36] it also offers an opportunity for customers to fulfil aspects of the service [36]. A common example of servitized services in Rolls Royce, whose business value comes from, and whose responsibility lies in servicing and maintaining engines rather than the sale of engines (Black Pepper, 2012).

The concept of servitization rest on five primary complimentary considerations; a shift from products to solutions, outputs to outcomes, transactions to relationships, suppliers to network partners, and elements to ecosystems of complex products. To a large extend, servitization exists in IT industry particularly with the advent of the cloud, where software is offered and delivered as a service, i.e. SaaS. In the greater scheme of things, the offering and delivery of services in cloud computing removes the burden of upfront hardware and software costs, including their maintenance and arguably generates huge revenues. [37]

Service-oriented processes such as service-oriented architectures, service-oriented computing, and service-oriented infrastructures, are a growing trend in both academia and industry, as a means for achieving greater business integration [36]. Just as cloud computing augments traditional information technology; hardware, software, networking, and infrastructures, etc. to provide computing as a service, service-oriented testing and service-oriented VE testing in particular, can evolve to mitigate some of the current business and technical challenges. Foremost, service-oriented functional requirement gathering from users can be enabled through the web in a SaaS-centric Web App using APIs.

However, despite the numerous features of the cloud which inherently enable servitization of a wide variety of use cases, the aforementioned gap within academic literature and market research which surrounds the lack of offerings in the area of virtual infrastructure testing as a service, cannot be ignored.

An analysis of this literature highlights a number of key elements. Whilst the myriad of previous work available shows that the technical capabilities of performing such testing is possible, the primary clash between cloud platforms and the servitisation of virtual infrastructure testing can be summarized as the need to cover a wide variety of heterogeneous software and hardware environments, having a huge detrimental impact upon the economy of offering the service within the cloud. Every time an additional platform, architecture, software application is included for support, the cost and complexity increases. As the cloud is designed foremost to be economical for the user and provider, and servitisation is meant to fit a competitive business model, this clearly defines an issue for the servitization of this area.

Offering virtual environment testing as a service which covers a single use base, as a bespoke service, encounters fewer challenges, as the system complexity and cost is kept to a minimum. Conversely, when offering it is a cloud based service, it is necessary to cover an extremely large number of use cases which in turn involves a drastic increase in cost and complexity, upon the cloud providers part.

Therefore, the ability to offer virtual infrastructure testing as a cloud service may be accomplished through the mitigation of this economic problem. As such the next section

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provides a breakdown and discussion of the challenges in order to derive future areas of research.

III. CLOUD-BASED TESTING SERVITISATION FOR VIRTUAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The challenges discovered within the previous section were found to be wide ranging and many. Many of these challenges were a result of the cloud environment, or the complex nature of the environments to be tested and hence the testing process as well. It was therefore realised that the lack of a complete solution for a cloud based virtual infrastructure testing service was due to the clash between the cloud-based servitisation of the complex testing environment. Therefore in order to mitigate this problem and successfully drive forward the solutions in this area, we propose a framework for cloud-based virtual infrastructure testing servitisation. Firstly, the requirements for a service are categorised through an analysis of the challenges noted in the previous section. Next, a framework for the service processes is presented, and then finally the requirements are mapped to the aforementioned process in order to complete the guidelines for producing a service.

Tremendous focus in software development has been trust towards evaluating requirements gathering techniques. An attempt to mention all works in this regard will result in an excessively long list, nonetheless, we refer to the reader to a survey [38]. An overview of such technique include model-driven techniques discussed in [39], group eliciting methods which include RAD/JAD workshops and prototyping techniques [40] which are generally used where there exists a significant amount of uncertainty about the requirements. In addition, knowledge-based management systems gave rise to cognitive [41] and contextual techniques [42], to mention a few.

Despite a huge research interest, we deduce that requirements gathering techniques are generally viewed as traditional or conventional, with a variance in opinions on methodological fundamental between advocates of each view. It is our view nonetheless that, the positives in each group of approaches are complimentary, and as such, we focus here on a method which suits the nature of this article. We use a scenario-based approach [43] which foremost, encapsulates significant enterprise-centric data we gathered in this study, and the secondly highlights the significance of the enterprise-driven method we will follows in the remainder of this article.

In this section, the servitization of software testing for virtual environments is illustrious of the enterprise organisation, with business goals, tasks, business rules of operation, and a clearly defined aim of the system. Premised on a high-level business goals which will be described in the case scenario to follow, we aim to demonstrate the high-level business goals which we deductively derive from an analysis in section **. In line with an argument in [44], it is our opinion that from high-level business goals, fine-tuned operational requirements can then be extracted by iteratively repeating the requirement gathering process, until operational requirements are met.

The testing target is considered to be a virtualisation-based corporate IT infrastructure of arbitrary size. The environments may consist or one, or a combination of some of the following examples:

- **VDI Infrastructure** - Virtual Desktop Infrastructures are becoming common place due to their economy and ease of management. Typically desktop machines will be replaced by thin-clients, which will connect to a hypervisor where the desktop (or applications) are stored and executed. These systems will likely be many, with small resource requirements.

- **Information Systems** - The systems which support corporate environments may also virtualised. These could include typical services such as storage, e-mail and web services. Or it might include servers for administration such as finances. These systems are likely to be fewer than the desktop infrastructure but with greater resources per unit, with scalable resources.

- **Resource Intensive** - These virtual instances are concerned with heavy resource intensive tasks, leveraging virtualisation architecture to perform heavy processing operations such as data mining or simulation. These machines vary in resource type but will often have one or two resources which are particularly and high and a large number of them.

A. VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT TESTING AS A SERVICE: CHALLENGES

Cloud-based testing of virtual environments presents a number of important challenges, which could be grouped into three distinct categories; technical, business, legal and privacy. For brevity sake, and to aid simplicity in our illustrations we assign each category a unique identification; T for technical, B for Business and L for legal.

Herein, the technical challenge group describes issues that broadly relate to the underlying software and hardware technologies used. These generally concern ineffective implementations which have a negative impact on the overall testing process. Technical issues may increase in intensity as they propagate through the employed methodology, creating poor environments for empirical testing by misrepresenting real world scenarios. Technical issues are easily identified through performance evaluation metrics. Solutions to these issue will typically require one or more of the following: Novel software or application implementations, and additional hardware or more efficient architecture design. Furthermore, the business challenge group describes issues regarding knowledge and processes required for the successful and economical design, execution, analysis and evaluation of the service offering. A variety of business stake-holders are involved in the process, and may be associated with

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a number of providers: Cloud Service Providers, Software Testing Service Providers, and Corporate Users of Virtual Infrastructure. Solutions for business issues involve optimizing methodologies and business processes including additional knowledge into the service, or periodically reviewing the efficacy of a process.

In addition, Legal and Privacy challenge group describes those issues which are typically concerned with any issues which involve a potential for deployment or use of the system to be in breach of legislation in any country. These issues are particularly inherited from the cloud computing paradigm, which is often criticized for concerns relating to legislation due to the variable state of data-centre location.

Software testing focused considerations for each challenge groups are described in detail in the following subsection.

1) Technical

T1 - Security of test data and test environment: Software testing is an activity that is often not considered as a business-critical activity. This makes it an ideal activity that can be moved to the cloud without fear of risks to clients business critical data, for instance, undermine the integrity of. However, the test data and the test environment need to be adequately secured. [14] [2] [3].

T2 - Need for adequate metrics for measurement of resource usage: Considerations for ensuring availability of adequate metrics, tailored for analyzing usage of provisioned resources within cloud-based testing environments, while running tasks and processes. Metrics mechanism should be capable of issuing indicators/notifications such as: completion of test case execution, under-utilization or over-utilization of resources to trigger auto-decommissioning or auto-provisioning of more resources. In essence, this could be a context-aware metrics measurement mechanism that can be a triggered to an automated cloud manager, or be integrated within the functions of a cloud manager within a cloud-based testing platform [14] [45].

T3 - Appropriate and accurate Test Data generation: In some testing scenarios, effectiveness of testing may require actual production data. In cloud computing, privacy issues surrounding the ownership of data, and transparency in data handling is an existing issue [46] [47] [48]. But that still creates an area of concern when clients know that their data whether, mission-critical or not will still need to be out there in the cloud for the sake of increasing testing effectiveness in the cloud. Therefore, cloud-based testing scenarios may need to come up with a solution that can accept production data, perform transformations on the content but retain similar structure to pass as mock production data that can be as close as possible to the real deal.

T4 - Artificial Fault Generation: In any test environment, the ability to generate artificial faults in a necessity [20], particularly in order to determine resiliency within the application. Fault injection is relatively simple for software based problems, but hardware based fault injection maybe more difficult. Although similar to test data generation, artificial fault generation exists at a different level and will need to be developed and managed appropriately.

T5 - Customization of Tools: In order to provide sufficient testing functionality for a variety of use cases, open-source tools are widely leveraged due to their minimal operating costs, high customizability and (in many cases) reputation for reliability, accuracy and stability [13] [22]. However, many of these tools are not standardized to suit any particular testing environment or framework. Therefore they may need to be customized, which will require development in expertise in numerous programming language. Development of testing will also require a generalized framework for integration of these tools into the overall testing framework.

T6 - Migrating Non-Cloud Apps to the Cloud: Some applications which are required to be tested within virtual environments are not developed to be executed upon the Cloud [13] [2]. Therefore one cited issue is that many applications may need to be adjusted for suitability within the cloud, taking advantage of and working in tandem with cloud features (scalability etc.). However this issue is not seen as too pertinent to the project due to the nature of environmental encapsulation offered by virtualized environments which are a key target for testing.

T7 - Heavy Reliance upon Automation: Automation is vital through the testing process for a number of reasons [20] [2] [19]. It allows tests to be streamlined by minimizing human input, maintains consistency between tests by ensuring stages are executed at the correct times and is overall necessary to operate highly complex environments such as the testing framework, and the targets of the test case. This will essentially require a considerable amount of development, with this development comes increased complexity. Therefore it is necessary to ensure that this automation is developed with stability in mind, so as to minimize errors within the system; as minimal as possible, so as to maintain low levels of complexity, and with efficiency in mind, so as to not delay the operation of the testing environment.

T8 - Interoperability: Allowing cloud applications to operate upon different cloud software and virtualization platforms is an inherent issue to cloud computing [2]. Preventing vendor lock-in is an issue solved by open container formats, open-source APIs and other mitigation efforts by the online community and software vendors. As such, is not seen as a huge issue within this project.

T9 - Accurate Environment Representation: Nowadays, computer environments are not only complex, but are also formed from a huge variety of different software and hardware architectures. Ensuring these are included within the system is essential to operating an appropriate service. Additionally, the virtual environments used for testing may also not accurately represent those within production environments [18], if this is the case then testing process could be considered inaccurate. A key problem driving this issue is VM collocation interference, which as a known factor within virtualized environments.

T10 - Accurate Measurement: Providing accurate measurement is difficult under any circumstances as merely implementing measurement practices will cause additional strain upon the system [19] [2] [3]. It is therefore important to ensure that any measurement procedures are implemented correctly, consistency and minimally. Software automation and correct application of pre-existing APIs will enable this.

T11 - Inherent Cloud Features: There are some features of cloud environments which may cause issues during testing [2] [3] [20]. For example, the ability of the cloud to scale enables multiple tests (with varying configurations) to run in parallel. However, scalability is costly, and therefore might cause unexpected financial burden upon the end user. This strengthens the argument for needing adequate and transparent pricing models. A feature which is fortunately already enabled within the cloud to a certain degree but some adaption will be necessary. Migration could be a potential issue during test cases as it would cause the environment to not be static and therefore cause measurement metrics to be inaccurate and difficult to repeat. This strengthens the argument for a greater degree of control over, or development of an entirely new, cloud management system for the testing process.

T12 - Software Development Process Integration: The software development lifecycle varies form use case to use case, a service offering which includes the ability to conduct software, as well as system, testing must integrate effectively with the development life cycle [13]. As this may involve inclusion in a number of different places, and with manual processes, it is therefore essential that each integration occurs smoothly.

T13 - Cloud Environment Dependability: Due to the layered nature of the cloud, the dependability of its lower layers may be unknown to a higher level service [49]. Therefore failures occurring at a low level may have an impact upon the testing process occurring at a higher level in that a low level fault may be recorded as an error in the testing of the virtual environment. Therefore a method of ensuring knowledge of the lower levels of cloud dependency within the system is necessary for an accurate testing process.

2) Business

B14 - Need for elaborate pricing models: Cloud services have been widely reported to present cost-effective alternatives to traditional means of accessing and utilizing computing resources and services, amongst other benefits [50] [17]. But, there still remains a need to move away from pricing approaches showing only a high level view of prices for cloud services [51]. There is a need for more transparent pricing models showing more descriptive and detailed pricing for related services and service components, e.g. network-bandwidth costs.

B15 - Security and privacy for business: despite being, in the majority, a technical issue, requiring technical solutions; security may also be grouped under a business challenge. As data breaches may be costly to a business and an end user and therefore appropriate mitigation procedures must be balanced with risk in order to ensure the cost of a potential data breach is minimized [2].

B16 - Level of Domain Knowledge required: for each individual testing project undertaken, an appropriate level of domain knowledge will be required in order to carry out the test as accurately as possible. Where less than suitable knowledge exists for the test, results may be inaccurate or not easy to repeat. Certain situations such as testing the security of an application will undoubtable require expert domain knowledge in that area [12].

B17 - Balancing Business Criteria with Testing Goals: one cited issue is the need to align testing criteria with business related goals. Many of these may be summarized as ensuring high economic output as a result from accurate testing [3]. For example, they cite the need to minimize errors, accurately predict the target, and high accuracy during reproducibility of tests.

B18 - Availability of Test Data: In some cases, test data may not even be available, which is certainly the case when legislation concerning sensitive issues comes into play [12]. Therefore may be necessary to derive a process for ensuring artificial test data accurately represents the data it replaces.

B19 - Tester Availability: In addition to automated test data, functional components will often need to be conducted by hand [2] and therefore require manual testers to be available. This can create problems during the testing process such as halting tests until the number of testers are available. This issue may be mitigated in part through the rise of online services such as amazon mechanical turk.

3) Legal and Privacy

L20 Test Data Privacy: Privacy of end-user data is an issue that is inherent to the cloud [2]. It is related to security within cloud systems and their ability to withstand data breaches both from external and internal adversaries. The security of cloud environments is a contentious issue but is already typically solved by relevant technologies such as encryption and reliance upon trust between the CSP and the end-user. Service-Level-Agreements and accountability projects aid in mitigating and resolving issues that arise from security breaches.

L21 - Legislation: As a CSP may host the physical location of their hardware in numerous countries, it is important to ensure all operations undertaken upon their systems are legal within the country that they are located in [2]. This can create issues due to the self-service nature of the cloud, allowing customers to provision resources anonymously and autonomously, in turn disallowing sufficient oversight by the CSP to ensure the relevant legislation is being adhered to. These issues are typically solved by service agreements between the two parties.

L22 - Malicious and Illicit Use: the autonomous and anonymous provisioning of cloud services ensures they are open to abuse [46]. A cloud service provider must protect themselves against breaches of relevant legislation. A testing service could be leveraged to perform automated reverse

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TABLE 4. ViTaaS Requirments Mapping

Requirement	Challenges
R1 - Automated Provision	T7, T12, B14, B16, B18, B19
R2 - Multi-Platform Support	T5, T6, T8, T12
R3 - Accurate / Complex Pricing	T10, T12, B14, B17, L21
R4 - Security	T1, T2, T3, T4, T9, T10, B14, B17, L21
R5 - Accurate Test Process	T1, T2, T3, T4, T9, T10, T11, B16, B17, B18, B19, L20
R6 - Adhering to legalislation	T1, B15, L20, L21, L23

engineering to discover security flaws, or the complexity of the testing process could ensure that DoS attacks are easily executed through overloading of the system with an inefficient system set up.

L23 - Software Licenses The requirement of adequate software licenses is a constraining factor for the testing process [22]. If test cases are to operate in parallel, then a suitable number of licenses will be necessary else legislation will be breached by the service provider.

B. REQUIREMENTS FOR CLOUD-BASED VIRTUAL INFRASTRUCTURE TESTING SERVICE

The analysis of literature within the area, produced a number of challenges to the production of a virtual infrastructure testing as a cloud based service. In order to help drive the development in this area through a more thorough understanding of the necessities of the system from a technical, business and legal level, requirement categories were dervied via an analysis of the aforementioned challenges.

Foremost, the primary requirements of the system was produced, which provide the ability to offer virtual infrastructure testing. Next, each challenge was examined to further understand the requirements for the system. For example, many challenges were related to the accuracy of the testing process (R5), so challenges whose mitigation would improve the testing process were grouped under this category. For example, T1 mentions to improve the security of the test environment, poor security might entail poor integrity of the environment and therefore ensuring integrity will provide a better guarantee of the testing process. Another example is in Providing support for multi-platforms and architectures (R2), which creates greater complexity and cost of the system, but also allows the service to be offered to a wider use base. T6 is grouped under this category as through the adaption of non-cloud apps to cloud environments, the system would provide wider ranging support for systems and therefore enhance this requirement. Due to the number of challenges, this process continued until all the features for each challenge were mapped into requirements of the system.

These are summarised below:

1) **Automated Provision** - The ability of a user to autonomously provision and execute tests.

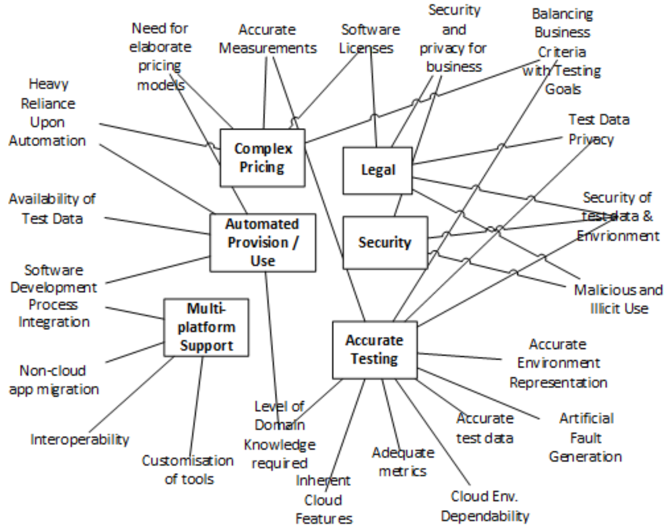

FIGURE 1. Requirements to Challenges Mapping

2) **Multi-platform Support** - The system will support a wide variety of heterogenous virtualised software and hardware platforms.
3) **Accurate / Complex Pricing** - The requirement to autonomously generate accurate prices for the complex test products.
4) **Security** - The system should provide security for the test envrionment, test data, the system itsef and it's users.
5) **Accurate Test Process** - A test process should be conducted that is accurate and representative, adhering to empirical principles.
6) **Adhering to legislation** - The system should not breach any legilsation which covers the area the system is executed in.

The mapping of the specifc challenges to their requirements is given in table 4 and fig. 1.

C. SERVITISATION FRAMEWORK

Following on from the requirements derived in the previous section, the development of the cloud-based testing system is further extended through the proposal of a framework for servitisation. This framework was developed in order to provide an understanding on the required processes for migrating the service to the cloud, and therefore create dependencies between servitisation requirements from the previous section, and servitisation process. This is accomplished by first defining the business goals of the service, and then linking these goals to processes gathered from literature. What should be noted here is that, this framework is aimed at providing useful insights into knowledge to guide decision making. The framework is only limited to the context of our research, and thus requires a design solution to completely fit holistic testing. Nonetheless, the servitisation framework helps businesses by providing the processes for 1) companies

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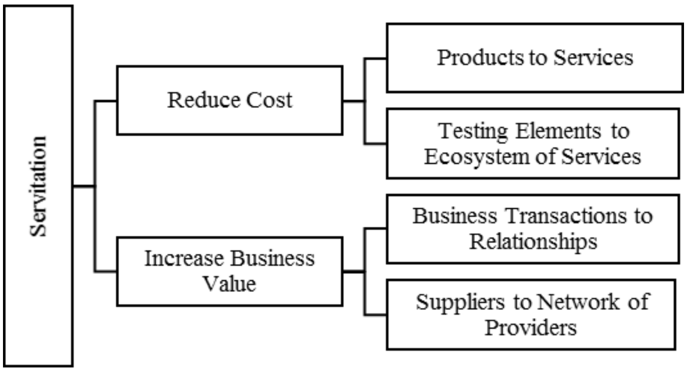

FIGURE 2. Cloud-based Software Testing Servitisation Framework

to objectively assess their goals, 2) identifying key processes to follow in order to meet set goals, and 3) mapping servitisation requirements processes, and identifying dependabilities.

Traditional software testing, an inherent component of traditional software development is only appropriate for testing individual software components [52]. Software testing involves some generic and well-defined functional and non-functional processes that are commonly reflected, and are typically applicable across varying testing scenarios (refer to previous sections for more detail on testing). Although the technical processes of testing (functional and non-functional) drive the business transactions between organisations, for instance, a testing provider and a client, technical testing processes currently exist outside the testing provider-client boundary. The alternative is the concept behind service-oriented provisions, where flexible, dynamic business processes are created with enough agility to span across multiple organisations and multiple platforms [53]. Such provision can arguably be viewed synonymous with other utilities such as water, gas, electricity, etc. [54] That being the case, we postulate that cloud-based testing of VE can indeed evolve to be provided as basic level of service, at least. To that end, we propose a business-centric testing framework drivel by common testing requirements which enables and optimizes business functions such as pricing, business relations, service agreements, legal liabilities, and networking with providers. In this manner, business functions of testing can be blended with other testing requirements such as quality assurance, security and integrity of data [55]. The vision is to provide a strategy that is also customer-centric, providing competent market-based resource management in both computing risks and service agreement [56]. Ultimately, it is also about adding value to a business while elevating its competitive edge, and creating new relationships [57].

We thus define cloud-based software testing servitization as: *the process of creating complex ecosystems of testing services from networked providers, providing software testing services instead of testing products, and building business relationships instead of business transactions.* We argue that, with servitization, it is indeed plausible to reduce costs while increasing the business value of testing.

Goals: In our proposed framework in fig. 2, goals for servitization include processes and strategies necessary to moving up the value chain, focusing on providing sophisticated services [58]. Increasing business value and reducing costs, distinguish the first layer (what we propose as goals) of our proposed framework in line with Vandermerwe and Rada s servitization concept [57]

Processes: Functional processes include transforming products to services, elements to ecosystems, transactions to relationships, and suppliers to networked providers, describes the transformations of how what goals are to be achieved to how to achieve the goals.

D. SERVITISATION PROCESSES MAPPING

Finally, to complete the service definition, the requirements for the cloud based framework are mapped to the service processes. This then allows a clearly defined understanding of the way in which improving the requirements to support the processes necessary for servitisation. Mitigation of the listed challenges for each requirement will therefore aid in the development of this process.

Transforming Products to Services: In order to create enhanced value and capacity, it is essential that a process enables changes, to ensure that the cloud-based software testing product is able to be delivered a service. Thus, the process of transforming *products to services* provides the following:

- Automated Use in order to allow service access
- Complex Pricing in order to manage charging for the service
- Multi-platform support to allow a wide user base
- Sound legal basis to ensure the service is legitimate
- Security to provide and ensure trust in the system

Transforming Testing Elements to Ecosystems: The second step towards reducing costs encompasses processes for converting traditionally individual *testing elements into ecosystems of services*. Along with ensuring that test data and the test environment are secure, the following requirements are important:

- Automated use to allow complex components to operate
- Multi-platform support to facilitate a wide range of testing services
- Security to ensure the integrity of the testing process
- Accurate testing to ensure that the testing process is effective

Transforming Business Transactions to Relationships: A servitization strategy entails that in addition to consolidating the core services, it it paramount to have a process in place, which focuses on creating intimate relationships with clients and suppliers. Thus, in order to transform *business transactions into relationships* the following requirements ought to be met:

- Automated use to facilitate that the service is operated on an on-going basis

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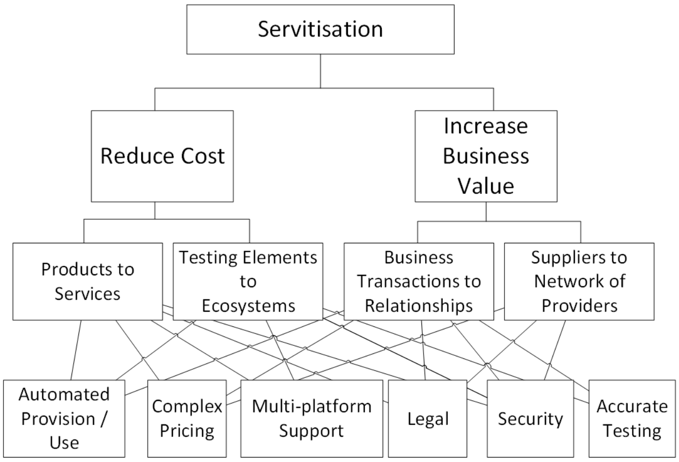

FIGURE 3. Service Processes to Requirements Map

- Complex pricing to accommodate and facilitate a variety of use cases
- Legal requirements which ensure that all provided services are legitimate
- Security, to provide trust between partners
- Accurate testing which will ensure that relationships continue and strengthen

Transforming Suppliers to Networks of Providers: Business opportunities such as marketing whereupon value creation is a result of cooperation between suppliers and customers, encompasses considerations for a changes in risk ownership, information sharing and a consistent delivery of information among partnerships. Thus, in order to transform *suppliers into networks of providers* the following service requirements ought to be considered:

- Complex pricing to facilitate a variety of goals
- Legal processes to provide a legitimate frameworks for negotiations.
- Security to provide trust and strengthen relationships

The mappings of these relationships is presented in fig. 6. Finally, in order to help drive the development of this framework, the next section proposes an analysis and some research trends to aid in enhancing the aforementioned requirements.

E. ANALYSIS

In this section, we briefly describe an individual organisations servitization requirements in order to provide context for out analysis, and direction for future areas of research.

Case Scenario

In order to provide a context and basis for the process of servitisation, the following real-world case study will be evaluated against the challenges posed in the previous section, in order to derive the necessary requirements for the process.

The case-study in question is concerned with the development and implementation of a public-cloud service which permits a customer to evaluate and optimise their virtual environments. Within this context, virtual environment refers to the collection of virtual machines, virtual appliances and their underlying supporting architecture i.e. hypervisors or container-based virtualisation technologies. The following are requirements for Company X

- Static Usage Cost of 100-200 GBP hourly
- Subscription Options dependant of service
- Network Performance to verify sufficient capacity
- Load Testing to assess response time under varying usage levels
- Stress Testing to determine minimum and maximum boundaries for system usage
- Online Help Centre for facilitate discussions between users and the support team
- A ticketed system which provides efficient support from an external team
- Initial and on-going training service as software receives updates or changes
- Multiple Client Support including a variety of device types

The ability to provide automation in the servitized system is a necessity due to the nature of cloud services, and the complexity of the testing process. However implementing automation can be challenging in complex processes, whilst the automation of the cloud can have a negative impact on emprical processes due to the increased dynamism. A primary area of focus we propose to mitigate this is through the development of a custom cloud management software, or heavy adaptions of the cloud manager in use.

Pricing models required of the system have been considered to complex due to the occasionally non-deterministic nature of the testing process. A number of areas of focus for research would benefit this issue. Firstly, by understanding and employing more accurate metrics, the costing methods can become more realistic. The application of predictive analytics/forecasting to the testing process, will ensure that pricing quotes are more accurate and finally, through providing greater system performance optimisation, such as through optimisation of VM placement, the system can overally function more economically.

In regards to increasing wider ranging support, the main solution is a costly one,i.e. to simply integrate greater diversity and redundancy into the system. Therefore a cost-benefit analysis employed by the service provider to examine which particular users might use the service more frequently would be beneficial.

Indeed, servitization comes with its legal considerations for enforcing and assuring quality, while reinforcing responsibility and accountability in business processes. Hence, a legal framework could be a central theme in future work to ensure that, for instance, there are common fronted assurances for all automated services regardless of a jurisdiction, but maintaining heterogeneity in whatever back-end automation services to fulfil different legal requirements. Additionally, with data centres built on land and in different jurisdictions, there is need for the legal framework to ensure that the

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servitization model is both enabled and yet complies with respective legislative discrepancies. This includes legal basis for defining imperatives about ownership and custodianship of, for instance, test data among the network of providers. Finally, a legal basis for control and utilization of the testing ecosystem will ensure fair business practices, particularly with pricing models.

The security of the cloud is an already a contentious issue, however the application of certain features such as cryptography, as well as research into enhanced techniques such as homomorphic encryption can improve customer trust in this area.

The area of improving adherence to empirical process is difficult to ensure under any circumstances. However, through providing accurate metrics, developing the custom cloud, increasing the accuracy of fault generation and integrating understanding of the cloud environment dependability within lower layers, accuracy can be improved. This area contains many potential solutions, most of which the service should select in accordance with an associated use-case.

IV. CONCLUSION

Virtual environments are beginning to underpin computing systems on a global scale, therefore testing these environments is essential to ensuring the economisation, and stability of computer systems. Unfortunately the complexity of modern networked environments has caused the evaluation of these systems to be highly expensive. To address this problem, this paper reviewed work in the area of VE testing, particularly the efficacy of leveraging cloud-based systems for automated testing as a service. A number of challenges were discovered from this review, which gave way to the development of some requirements for a servitisation of virtual environment testing. Furthermore, this extended into our developing a framework for servitisation. A number of further research areas were then highlighted, which would help pave the way for further research and possible systems development.

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