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Transition from Cloud to Fog Computing Paradigm: Applications, Constraints, and Research Challenges

Varsha R. Kamble[1], Shrenik R. Patil [2], Rekha S. Kamble[3]

[1]PG scholar(Computer Science & Engineering), DKTE Society's Textile & Engineering Institute (An Empowered Autonomous Institute), Ichalkaranji

[2]Assistant Professor(Computer Science & Engineering), DKTE Society's Textile & Engineering Institute (An Empowered Autonomous Institute), Ichalkaranji
[3]Assistant Professor(Computer Science & Engineering(AI)), DKTE Society's Textile & Engineering Institute (An Empowered Autonomous Institute), Ichalkaranji

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Abstract -
Cloud computing has not only revolutionized the provision of various services, including computational and storage resources, to end-users but has also played a pivotal role in advancing Internet of Things (IoT) applications. The rapid adoption of IoT applications across diverse sectors such as healthcare, transportation, home automation, and agriculture has led to an exponential increase in the number of connected devices. However, these devices generate massive volumes of data that often exceed the processing capabilities of IoT devices due to limitations in computational and storage capacities. To address this challenge, the integration of cloud computing with IoT, known as Cloud of Things (CoT), has become imperative. The heterogeneous and geographically distributed nature of CoT infrastructure poses challenges for traditional cloud models, such as high latency and scalability issues. In response, fog computing has emerged as a solution to process real-time applications closer to data sources, thereby enhancing latency, energy efficiency, scalability, and network congestion resistance. This article provides an extensive exploration of cloud computing, CoT paradigms, and fog computing, including their applications, architectures, research challenges, and limitations, highlighting the pivotal role of fog computing as a bridge between cloud and IoT.

***Key Words*: Cloud Computing, IoT, Latency, CoT, Fog Computing**

I. Introduction

Over the past decade, cloud computing has transformed the delivery of services, offering various models such as Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS), Software as a Service (SaaS), Platform as a Service (PaaS), and Function as a Service (FaaS) to end-users. Its characteristics, including elasticity, multi-tenancy, resource pooling, and scalability, have made it a preferred choice for companies, academia, and government organizations. With the advent of IoT, wherein every object seeks internet connectivity and generates data for diverse purposes, cloud computing has extended its services to IoT applications. The proliferation of connected devices, projected to reach 50-70 billion by 2025, necessitates the integration of cloud resources with IoT to manage the vast amounts of generated data efficiently. However, the limitations of traditional cloud models in processing latency-sensitive and real-time applications have led to the emergence of fog computing. By processing data closer to the source, fog computing addresses challenges such as latency, energy consumption, scalability, and network congestion. This article comprehensively explores cloud computing, CoT paradigms, and fog computing, elucidating their applications, architectures, research challenges, and limitations, with a focus on the pivotal role of fog computing in bridging cloud and IoT.

II. Cloud of Things (CoT)

Internet of Things (IoT) encompasses devices capable of internet connectivity, forming a dynamic global network infrastructure. These heterogeneous devices generate vast amounts of data, challenging traditional processing methods due to limited computational and storage capacities. Cloud computing, with its diverse resources and on-demand provisioning, addresses these challenges by providing storage and processing capabilities for IoT-generated data. The integration of cloud resources with IoT, termed Cloud of Things (CoT), offers innovative solutions across various domains. CoT applications span healthcare, smart homes, smart cities, video surveillance, smart energy, and environmental monitoring. However, CoT presents challenges such as protocol support, performance variations, security and privacy concerns, reliability issues, real-time monitoring requirements, energy efficiency, resource allocation, and data storage location considerations.

III. Fog/Edge Computing and Its Working Principle

While cloud computing operates through centralized data centers, it encounters limitations in serving IoT devices, particularly for real-time and latency-sensitive applications. To address these limitations and provide efficient services to IoT devices, fog computing has been introduced. Fog computing, championed by Cisco, decentralizes and localizes data-centric clouds, processing data closer to the source. Acting as an intermediary between end-users and cloud data centers, fog computing collects and processes data from sensors and equipment via wireless networks before forwarding relevant data to the cloud for permanent storage. Fog computing finds applications in various domains such as Energy Lattices, FoAgro (Agriculture), Connected Parking Systems, MediFog (Healthcare), and UXFog (Clustered Locations), enhancing efficiency and responsiveness in these areas. However, fog computing presents complexities and challenges in terms of security, authentication, maintenance, and overall system complexity.

IV. Conclusion and Future Work

In conclusion, this article provides insights into cloud computing, Cloud of Things (CoT), and fog computing, outlining their applications, architectures, challenges, and limitations. Fog computing emerges as a crucial paradigm in bridging cloud and IoT, offering solutions to real-time processing challenges and enhancing system efficiency. Future research directions include the development of resource scheduling algorithms for fog computing environments to optimize Quality of Service (QoS) parameters for real-time applications.

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