



CLOUD REALITIES

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FinOps Maturity & Consumption
Forecasting with Alison McIntyre,
FinOps Foundation

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[00:00:00] And I think that's basically it. We're ready. We're on and we're almost ready. Dave and we are ready. Okay. Good stuff.

Welcome to Cloud Realities, a conversation show exploring the practical and exciting alternate realities that can be unleashed through cloud driven transformation. I'm David Chapman. I'm Sjoukje Zaal, and I'm Rob Kernahan.

So we're live in London today, an event looking at thin ops, an important subject at the moment. I think the world is primed for a big conversation about the economy and economic headwinds. So FinOps, I think, has raised to the top of the cloud conversation pile very quickly over the course of the last six or eight months.

I think additionally cloud also has been [00:01:00] now prevalent in our lives for probably 10 years. And I think a lot of organizations over that period are getting to points of maturity and discovering. Some of the same issues with cloud, which is as you've been using it for a little while the costs can mount up and you need to address those costs in, in really practiced and sophisticated ways.

So today we're going to explore elements of that. We're live at an event hosted by Aptio and Capgemini. So thank you to the organizers for having us at the event. We're delighted to be here. Joining us today we are delighted to say is Alison McIntyre, UK Ambassador for the FinOps Foundation. Hi, Alison.

Good to see you. Hello. How are you? Thank you for having me. I'm very excited. No, it's absolutely our pleasure. Do you want to just introduce yourself and say a little bit about the FinOps Foundation? Yeah, Alison McIntyre. I come from Scotland. I've been working in industry and FinOps for the last few years.

My background is infrastructure. I've been IT infrastructure my whole career. I'm soon to leave the industry, [00:02:00] so I'm only an ambassador for the next month. So it's a countdown. I'm trying to squeeze in as many opportunities as I possibly can. Just in time. Yeah. I'm assuming that right at the top of your knowledge curve, that's where we're heading. That's where you've got me.

Perfect. Perfect bit of timing. So I became an ambassador because of my involvement in the FinOps Foundation. For those of you listening that haven't come across the FinOps Foundation, FinOps.org, there is so much information on it. FinOps Foundation was, it's part of the Linux Foundation, built off the back of the move to cloud and the need to manage cloud spend.

First off, FinOps, not financial management. Financial management and DevOps, very important, but you will learn that when you go to FinOps.org. There's some distinctions in there, I'm feeling, just say a word on those. It's not just about the budget, paying the cost of cloud and allocating the [00:03:00] cost out of cloud.

At its heart, it's about getting the most value out of cloud. It's not necessarily about saving money. Said that out loud. Everyone always, FinOps is always optimization. But actually at its heart, it's about getting the best value of every pound you spend in the cloud. And to do that, you need to know why you're spending it, how you're spending it, where you're spending it, when you're spending it.

Because with that information, you then make informed decisions. And to make informed decisions can only bring business benefit. And presumably how that correlates to business value. Yeah. Yeah. And that's when you're in the, that's when you're really cruising, when you know the value of your spend and there's high Simplify it a lot and say, would you be shocked



if your cloud bill doubled next month?

Yeah, not yet. What if your sales quadrupled? No, not so bothered, are you? Do you know the [00:04:00] correlation between your cloud spend and your business value? Because if you don't it's too financial and it's not business. You've got the business, the operations, the finance. Which is a, one of the many things cloud transformation brings, which is a move away from how IT is traditionally being managed, at least for the last 10 or 15 or even 20 years, which has been as a cost center.

And so much of it hidden. Absolutely. You know how people talk about below the line, above the line, but... I know that in my current organization, all the costs for our development environments, all our VM farms for development, goodness knows where they came off. Behind the line, buried somewhere. But I guarantee you it came off somebody's budget at the very top level before budgets were created.

So then when these same organizations are needing to pay for their whole route to live, cash it's really expensive because I only paid 10 over here and, I'm [00:05:00] feeble. But this is one of the things that Cloud's driving, isn't it, is this need for transparency. I love it. And cost centres have generally been very opaque and does an organisation really understand its cost centre?

But now with this unpredictable spend. Or potential unpredictable spend. Suddenly you need this visibility, and that's a real culture shock to many organisations. And it's really scary as well to many organisations. Because they get the visibility and then they're scared of what they're seeing. Didn't know that cost that.

And a lot of the conversations I have with my business areas are, how are you going to protect me against overspending and I get, depending on how well I know them and how strong my relationship is, I go down the route of going I'm not going to be protecting you, but I will give you the skills to protect yourself.

We often use the phrase that the FinOps team really is about holding a mirror. Up to the teams that are consuming the cloud. That's our role. Hold up, provide that transparency, [00:06:00] map it out, know what they're spending, support them. Yeah, sure. Of course. You do the central things and you do the central things well, but it's culture shift.

It's always culture shift. It is enormous. And of course when you're talking about money in an organization, it gets very sharp, very quickly. Yeah. A lot of finops. It focuses on the overspend that's visible and oh no, we've now got ourselves a position where we've uncovered this cost or we've gone to the cloud and we've had a sharp increase in cost, but actually how you forward plan.

Your cost and how you consumption plan over time has got to be a very significant component I think in what we're doing. So I know recently you led a working group on this for the FinOps foundation So maybe let's before we get into that subject Let's talk about what you did in the working group and what got you guys going on that.

Yeah twofold. There's if you flag the FinOps. org website, but if you also look at data. finops. org There's the state of FinOps survey that's done [00:07:00] every year and in that one of the questions is What's your pain points and you're allowed to choose multiple ones? And I think it was two years ago one of the wasn't the top runner, but it was the second runner was forecasting.

I found myself also in the position of being asked to say how much for our very large cloud Commitments that we were spending up to and how we were tracking against them or how



we might be apart from these commitments I was asked how much we were going to spend. Over what period? Yeah, quite a long period.

And so I, it was a big deal. So I went out to all the business areas and I did it top down. And it was it was a number. Everyone's happy with the number. Unfortunately, two months later, they asked me for the number again. And so I did it from the bottom up this time. Thinking, because that top down didn't really work.

And then by the third time I went, there's got to be a better way. And presumably each time you were calculating this, the number was getting bigger. Oh, it was too... [00:08:00] But then, strategies were changing and our big transformation programs were going, Oh, we're going to Google. Oh no. I think we're going to Azure.

Oh no. Maybe half public, half private. So every time there were so many different pieces, people couldn't, the goalposts moved, so it was all right, nobody tracked it back, but I couldn't track it back. I couldn't tell the story of change. So I was really interested in forecasting. I then saw the response from the state of FinOps that said forecasting was a real pain point.

So we were setting up a, or the foundation was setting up a working group, and I was a bit like, pick me, please can I be involved? And at that point, I thought clearly I've done it badly twice. Not sure I'm well placed, but I've got a lot to learn here. But it turns out that the richness that you get from forecasting, and some people listening might go yeah, she's just talking about budgetary forecasting and things.

But just to throw a few wins out from having good forecasts. Anomaly reporting. [00:09:00] People are scared. Now you talk about build shock, but that's after the fact. People want to control it. That's, cloud is in the moment. You get, people say, immediate, near real time visibility of it. How do you know if you're just basing anomalies based on what's happened to date?

When you're in a transformation, last month, yesterday, last week doesn't bear any resemblance to next month, next week, tomorrow. It's alright if you're steady state, have on, the machines can run the world. But if you're not, you need to add some knowledge to it. So we use our forecast that we get in now through a very slick process.

And we pump them into the cloud providers as budgets, then we run. Alerts off those budgets. So when somebody says, oh, why are you sending me all these alerts, , because they're based on your forecast. Really powerful. So you made a distinction in that description between a financial [00:10:00] forecast and consumption forecast.

Yeah. Just for those of us who haven't done as much of this, could you just set out what are the components of consumption forecasting that are different? And this might be an Alison thing and just from my background, but our budgets are done through a financial cycle and it's, we've talked today for those who haven't been here today, but we've talked today a lot about the CFO loans.

Our financial budgets are run through a whole different process, and then people are cloud consuming. That will be part of their financial budget. So the financial cycle, the same thing, the financial cycle in this case is presumably like a 12 month cycle based maybe off a three year plan or something along those lines.

Yeah. Yeah. But that was interchangeably. You're lunatics. Those are two different things. Exactly, but that's the lovely thing of getting involved in the foundation is that you get that much broader perspective. It's not just your own little world. And even if your world's



[00:11:00] quite big, there's such a mix, a huge, like full, the U S government stuff and how they do things.

So it was So we wrote a playbook on how to forecast, right? I threw everything outta my head on paper and extra paper. So what are the components of the model? Oh, they're all about things to consider. What's important to consider at the beginning? As an example, Your granularity.

Work out what level of granularity you want to go down to up front. Because otherwise you have to go, if you change your mind and you want more granular, you have to start right back at square one. Whereas your frequency, you can change your frequency. Your process is still there. And it's the elements of how might you measure, what KPIs might look like.

There's quite a few user stories in there. One of mine, That I was being reminded of yesterday that seemingly is re quoted quite a lot, is I say to, [00:12:00] to my customers when they say, I don't know what to forecast Alice and I don't, they're new customers, they're coming, they're onboarding, and before they even get on the cloud I'm like, oh, what's your forecast, and I my book.

Not my book, my digital book. I don't know. My sword, do you think you're ready to come to cloud? If you don't know. Have you got a design? Oh yeah, I've got a design. Put it in the calculator. Yeah, but I might forget something. You might forget something. It's not the end of the world. Because I'm not holding you to account on this number.

I want you to think about it. I want you to put a stake in the ground. And then, when you start getting your actuals through, I want you to be a good citizen and compare them against where your stake was. And then, you know what, you can move your stake. Because you're learning. And that's how I try to gently tap into the culture shift without saying to them, Oh, it's a culture shift, because there's nothing more likely to turn people off when you're telling them that they've got to change their culture.

It's just have a [00:13:00] shot. If you want me to help you, I'll work through it, but you know what? I don't know your designs. And in this process, are you tracking purely on cloud costs? Are you tracking kind of any additional residual costs in the organization? I know one of the speakers at the conference today talked about actually they've seen proliferation of FinOps teams themselves across the organization.

So there's all of these additional additive costs above the cloud. So we, I just asked them for what? They are going to consume based on what infrastructure or services that they will spin up in the cloud. I then asked them to obviously put VAT on it, because in the UK everything we pay VAT on. But I also asked them to put an uplift on it that covers what I term my shared costs.

So those are things like express route, diner trace, oh, support. And I [00:14:00] manage that centrally, so that I've got my shared cost uplift, so nobody ever gets a surprise. I have this real abiding drive that says, I will not ever, how to word this, I should have it more down pat, shouldn't I? That the consumer is the one that affects their spend.

So let me explain what I mean by that. So if I had 100, 000 worth of shared costs, and I happen to have 10 business areas, and then the next month I had 11 business areas, my shared cost was still much the same. The share of that shared cost, if I did just divided by 10, divided by 11, Those customers haven't changed.

They're my customers. Those consumers haven't changed any of their behaviours, any of their consumption, but their bill has changed. There might be people out there going,



brilliant, my bill's gone down. I work in an organisation where [00:15:00] it's bad to come in both under and over budget for some bizarre reason.

0.5 percent I've signed. I think that. Therefore, if you do a percentage, so for every pound you spend, that you have chosen to spend on infrastructure X or code Y, that you, it's always uplifted by this percent. Our central team, our wider CCOE, carry the risk of managing that budget against all of our shared costs.

That's how we get round some of the proliferation of the other costs. Got it. And you mentioned culture. Yeah. And Rob, I know you've got some observations on the cultural change around FinUp. So I wonder if you'd like to share some of that. So there's the point we discussed earlier about making things transparent.

Yeah. For financial processes, that can be a difficult thing, and having an uncomfortable conversation about true spend. We on your journey you talk about this iteration of maturity and getting better and better top down than you tried the bottom up and then the sort of take [00:16:00] a punt and we'll get better on the variation.

What's the sort of time scale you've done that through very large organisations? It feels like it was quite a period to get through that sort of mind shift to say we're going to make things transparent. We're going to have a conversation about this and it's going to be continuous. Is that a sort of...

Yeah, I would it's funny because you, like me saying to them, put a stake in the ground and you can always keep moving it. I'm always moving my stake. So not only is my forecasting process changed, but my... My engagement across the whole business has changed. And short answer is probably about a year.

Yeah. But I would say it's never finished. Until nine months in, I never reported on their accuracy. Never once. They asked me, how accurate am I? Don't worry about accuracy. If they're, it's not beyond the wit of anybody to look at their spreadsheet that they gave in last month and their actuals this month, but then I was like [00:17:00] no, I checked it. I'm measuring myself on, it's a funny thing, I measure myself and my team on someone else's numbers and someone else's accuracy. But that's a measure of my success in supporting them. Yeah, and it feels like it was an uncomfortable thing at the beginning. But does it get better and people start to get into it and then they start to embrace it?

Some are great, yes. Some are really great. And they, I'm really sorry I was out by 20p or something. I love those people. You have the other teams that say, Oh yeah, I did my podcast in January. No, we're going to come and speak to you every single month and they don't understand the why so I gave you the explanation of How we use it for anomaly detection and reporting.

We also use it for wider reporting We use it for scaling our skill set and our resources in the CCOE there are a lot of reasons why and also it is their protector [00:18:00]

So one of the cultural things that I observe in a number of different areas of cloud and that you've just touched on it is that issue of frequency. So moving from I did my forecast and my plan for a year I'll see you next January versus I'm going to see you in three weeks time and we're going to talk about it again.

So how have you coached teams through that process? And how did you handle resistance in that process? Oh, I think it's fair to say I'm still handling resistance. I always wanted to go in with that collaborative approach. I didn't want it to be, I'm going to tell your boss on you because you've not put a forecast in.



No, it's only going to go so far. Yeah, exactly. There are still some who consistently don't respond. But to the point we were just making about the evolution of what we're doing, I'm now looking at, instead of just saying, out of, we've got about 120 people we go out to forecast every month. [00:19:00] Out of the 120, we used to be getting maybe 40 percent response rate.

I called that a win because we used to get nobody. Yeah. It could be worse. Yeah, exactly. It's trending up. And then we were, we're up about 75 percent now in the last sort of four months. And then when you look at actually, that tells a story, that tells a story from a people, a volume of people perspective, but what is, how does that translate to volume of spend?

How does that translate to volume of accounts? Because if there's a couple of not so good citizens out there that have only really got a couple, dev tested accounts that they've tried and they don't really care about, and the citizens that are good and are responding and are reviewing it, if they've got the hundreds of accounts, happy days, then my percentages are up at 93, 94.

So with that progress, what would you say the organizational conversation is now? So we've talked a bit about the journey and the difficulties [00:20:00] of creating the framework and then driving through some of the culture change and process. Has that now changed the organizational conversation? Do people understand some of the dynamics in a more sophisticated way?

I think we're still, we're still quite early on our journey. We work in a highly regulated banking industry. And it takes a long time, and we've had our strategy set and reset quite a few times. Yes, in areas. One of our very big areas is our data team, and we've got so much data. And great big old data warehouses that we're bringing onto the Google Cloud.

They are all over it. because they are what I call a shared service. I could charge them, but actually their data is being used by other areas within the bank. And somebody who sits in mortgages could cause their costs to double and they would never know. [00:21:00] But I'm asking them for forecasts. How the heck are they going to know what mortgage?

So we're then getting that hub and spoke model out with them. They are super engaged. But as you learn the power of cloud, it can create more curiosity. So data curiosity is one. And suddenly you start running these really big queries against data sets and you get this unpredictable spend.

And I think people ICANN. Model a server, it'll cost me X, it'll cost me Y, I can change it. But then there's this, if I run a complex algorithm and I don't know how long it's going to take to process, how do I cope with forecasting when it could be potentially chaotic results? Yeah. Have you got a view on how you can maybe cope a bit better with that?

I don't quite know. I really don't know. Yeah. It's not just plug something into the calculator. We don't have answers if I'm completely honest. We're working through it, we're working really... Our data's gone to Google, they're being quite good at data. I think I'm probably allowed to say that.

I've said it now. It's on record. [00:22:00] They are working really closely with us and we're looking at those options for quotas, but quotas that don't... adversely affect good work. You don't want to stop something good. You just want to be aware that it might be driving costs you weren't expecting. But I must admit, it really shines a light on where your cultural journey has taken you to.



How people are responding to you. And my litmus test is the level of fear that they're talking with. How are you going to protect me? What about this? What about that? You go. Whereas I have other business areas and okay, they've started small, they didn't lash loads of cash on great big things. But they've moved things from some of our IBM Sandbox environments, some from Oracle and on.

And they've now got numbers to see that their costs have gone down. So back to the earlier point you were making about that total cost of ownership. And [00:23:00] it comes up probably every month in my world. Oh, tell me what it was over here. I know you badly want that because that's at the heart of a business case, but actually you're going to spend the next 12 months having, I'll give you a fag packet with rough numbers on you and I promise it won't be that far away from it.

People want exact numbers so that you can compare exact. Sometimes you just got to take a bit of a leap of faith. You've got to make sure it stacks up enough in order to launch and then start monitoring it. Then start looking at The extra benefits, the agility the transparency in itself brings so much benefit.

Are you seeing engineering teams step up to their responsibilities in this, to use Rob's example from earlier, where a team might be doing a big data exploration. So they've got a lot of extra capacity spun up, a lot of extra processing power spun up. Are they building into their code ways to actually look after that financially yet?

I'm not seeing that. It seems like [00:24:00] immaturity step that we're maybe not at yet as an industry. I would say so. I think, so through the foundation, I do hear people speak about this stuff. You think, wow, they're really cool. But they are probably also people who are maybe more born in the cloud. Also very DevOps orientated instead of Maybe getting infrastructure and app dev people moving to the cloud.

There is a shift. And I'm not saying there's a lack of capability, but you do take that historic way of working. The culture shift is hard. No, you. We're all shaped by our histories. That's right. So I am seeing some really clever stuff, but those tend to be those born in the cloud because the engineers are engineering for money.

Not necessarily start ups, but start ups they then pay loads of attention to it and it's smaller So you can see it then it [00:25:00] grows and you've already got a handle on it. You start with that ingrained Think it works a lot better and it's slick. It's amazing to see you know, and you talk battles around the Netflix's and Those, they're really huge now, the real born in the cloud companies.

Because they do this really well. And everything's code, and everything's monitored, and everything's automated, including the cost. They're all over it. I think it's actually really hard for organizations, and especially regulated organizations, who have got a data center. So we talked loads about the cultural shift, but there's like layers of cultural shift, isn't there?

Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. The point you make about taking infrastructure engineers into the cloud is very well made because they bring with them an internal tick speed about how things work and how things operate. And actually, when you look at a cloud [00:26:00] transformation, you change the governance layer, you change the financial model, you change the ways of working.

All of these things are often in service of getting to a faster tick speed, but what people perhaps don't recognize with that is that the attention to detail and the speed with which you have to then iterate some of your assumptions or some of your forecasts Also increases



in speed.

Does that make sense? You can't leave, you can't leave it a year out. Or even a month. You hear stories, don't you? Somebody forgot to switch something off on a Friday afternoon. That's 30 grand come Monday. At least they know it's 30 grand come Monday, right? But... That's a bad Monday though, isn't it?

A really rubbish start to the week. That graph with the big peak in the red zone, isn't it? You know we talk about getting engineers to take action. Engineers and an SRE is a Site Reliability Engineering, sorry I try hard not to use acronyms, but I'm my own worst enemy. And that move of [00:27:00] those that develop, support, and run basically.

Sorry to anybody SRE listening, but I've probably mangled that but that's what it is in my simplistic view. I need to develop, support, run, monitor. Check the cost. All the time. So I was talking about our big our data program that's running. And they were running some of the vast, I wish I should have, I'll come back for a second series and I'll have numbers of petabytes.

But they, over this sort of three week period they were doing huge data loads And realizing that their design needed more oomph because it was taking a lot longer than planned, so they threw in more. Brilliant! The cloud allows you to do that! Magic! Costs quadrupled. They were all over it.

And they were saying to me, do you know, Alison, [00:28:00] that if I look at the costs at nine o'clock, one o'clock in the afternoon, and then I look at them for yesterday at nine o'clock the next morning, they go up, and then they go back down. And I was like yeah, then maybe get your discounts and everything.

But it's that idea of, I loved it. It was, I could spend all day with the data team because they care. They're all over it. They ask the hardest questions. It's become a dynamic conversation at that stage. Yeah, because then to your earlier questions, yeah, they're right at it. Yeah. So I want to just bring the conversation to a bit of a close with a couple of words on how you link the consumption forecasting aspect of what we've been talking about to some of the bigger cost optimization concerns that we've been talking about today.

There was a discussion earlier around whether you could automate, say, the reduction of cloud footprint. And actually, I think a lot of the organizations that are in the conversation today felt that was maybe still a step too far. [00:29:00] So how close are you, do you think, as an industry, given the amount of lift and shift that's still going on?

So we know there's not a lot of hugely optimized workloads out there. of being able to connect your consumption forecasting model to automated management of environments. I'd probably split that we should

automate as much of those optimisation recommendations as possible. But it shouldn't ever be done centrally by the FinOps team. It's not the FinOps workloads. We want. To have a partnership and collaboration with our engineering teams. We don't go do stuff to their stuff. Sorry, that's so technical words.

I like to keep it basic. It's just, first off, I, you can maybe tell by my voice, I just find that incredibly rude. But I do feel equally strongly [00:30:00] about and here is my automated tooling, my nugget, whatever it is. And I expect you engineering team to use it. 'cause I have made, I have taken all the difficulty outta it.

I've removed all the, I busy on this. I've almost done the automation in a pocket that they can apply. There you go. There's your code. Go automate. And it's for this. And I've got a library



of them and do them. It's just agility, isn't it? Do it at the smallest level so that they can mix and match. Bringing that back into forecasting though, when you're looking more at the rate optimisation as opposed to the usage optimisation, the forecasting, because in the main, I might even go so far as to say, rate optimisation should always be done centrally.

I don't believe in it being done by the individual engineering teams out there. Even if you are just doing, buying a reservation on one [00:31:00] subscription that is owned by the business area, I don't, I just strongly personally don't believe that's right. Is that because of the economies of scale issue? There's not necessarily economies of scale, because if you only buy it at the individual subscription, you don't get to share the risk.

And I've bought both, I've bought enterprise wide and at the individual. And I tell you what, it's a hell of a lot easier to do it at the individual because the costs that land in the individual, they pay for it's transparency. As soon as you buy it at the enterprise, it's a pig because it can land anywhere.

Anybody gets the benefits. Back to my point about how can their bill change if they've not changed anything. Oh, that messes with my head, but when you're looking at the enterprise or the potential for enterprise wide reservations or savings plans. It's really good. You've got to go speak to everybody.

It's slow. Because you don't know whether they're going to stay on that. Don't open yourself up to that risk. But your first step, if you've got good forecasts, it's okay, I [00:32:00] see that they're only growing. I'm definitely going to go speak to them. It doesn't give you the exact answer, but it's at your fingertips.

I'm a big believer in have as much data as I can. Create a context for the conversation that didn't exist before. And I can go out and I can say, Oh, I see that. Oh, you're pretty steady state. You're staying the same. I was, I'm seeing this recommendation. I think we should lock in at this. This is what would save you, are you really gonna go for three years, yadda.

But it, I go in more informed as well, which also gains their respect a bit more. It's always that loop.

Very good. Thank you, Arsene. That is a good point to pause and see, Schalke, if you've got any audience questions. Yes, we received a lot of good questions. Yes. The first one. What would your advice be for companies that get started with Phinepps? What would be the first steps they should [00:33:00] take? If you're already in the cloud, so you've already got cloud spend, you need to know who is responsible for that spend.

It's all about visibility. Different ways to do that. We've talked about tagging and things, but. You can't, I know you could go and optimise, but back to the point about, I think it's wholly inappropriate for the FinOps team to be optimising somebody else's workloads. You've got to know who owns them to have the conversation.

Keep it simple though. I would, if you're not quite, In the cloud and you're going to the cloud and you're in that, you're in that nice organizational situation where you're actually setting everything up in advance. I'm not sure I'm speaking to anybody in that position, but I would strongly advise FinOps team or somebody being a an approver.

I hate to make it too archaic, but part of that [00:34:00] onboarding journey. That it's. Johnny from marketing who's spinning up this and if you've got a naming convention, you can link them back or Johnny's going to use tags like this so you can link them back. But build something in from the start that will allow you to align your spend.

And I'm a believer in doing it by organization and workload. Very good. Because there's



always workloads, if possible, map it into your CMDB, have it as your application ID, you do that from the beginning. Because I tell you what, there's a heck of a lot, in most organizations I know, there's a lot more control over changes on the CMDB and whatever tool you have that in, that's, that's 20 years before us.

Yeah. And from a cultural perspective, what would you advise be where to start and when? As soon as possible. Absolutely. As soon as possible. I think everybody should speak [00:35:00] about it all the time, but I'm really boring. It's certainly a pre migration conversation. I think that's clear for me, which is so many organizations get into migration and then start to think about it because they think they know what the cloud is going to be like.

So for me, it always feels like actually. One of the first two or three things you should be talking about is actually the change in the financial management of the situation. I would agree, but I would also say there's two, there's two extremes to that. You can just, so long as you choose one knowingly, would be my guidance.

You can choose to almost wait till you get Billshock or close to Billshock because then what do you know? There's your business case in a box for doing FinOps and people are going to listen to you. and pay attention to you because they want to. It's a bit risky, isn't it? Let it go almost off the rails to recover.

Trial by fire, and then you learn fast. There is something to be said for that because otherwise people are like, we're trying to run [00:36:00] a transformation, and what are you doing in my ear? We have to remember that there are a lot of other priorities. And finance is really important.

But it's actually not the top priority. I can't believe I'm saying that I cannot believe that's come out in that house. I know not other day. Today, in my world, it is the most important thing, but in an engineer's world or in a program manager's world, or in a huge digital transformation, but you've got to know what your organization's, what is, or the why.

Why does it matter? For mine, we've got financial control all over the place. And how are you going to protect me? You want me to protect you, you've got to give me finance. If your why is, Go hard and go fast and just get it into the cloud and we'll clean up the rubbish later. Maybe not. Maybe use that as your leverage.

You mentioned that [00:37:00] FinOps might not be top of mind for transformation teams, but I think something that's top of mind for society at the moment is the link to sustainability. Yeah. And I'm very curious. There is a strong connection between FinOps and sustainability. So what is the FinOps Foundation doing on that topic?

With the last European summit that we had a couple of months ago. It came up and it was part of the panel discussion and wholeheartedly the room agreed that Green Ops, as we were calling it, should absolutely sit as part of the FinOps function. Because, if you optimize You either, okay, if you rate optimize your spending less, yeah, I get that's not getting you any greener But if you usage optimize, all of that's got a CO2 measure against it.

It's a whim every time. And then what I'm seeing is that companies that [00:38:00] might not like to publicly say how much they've saved through optimization will actually really happily say how much they've saved in CO2 through optimization. So it's I think they're utterly linked and I think it's, it comes down to data and visibility and if FinOps is advising and guiding and part of that helping people make the right decision to choose the right services.

Yes, maybe with a cost lens, but why can't it just be a different lens? It's still, it's just. It's



data, but they're so interlinked. So a great point, I think, to end today's conversation on one of the biggest problems of our time, the sort of tooling we've been talking about all morning can actually actively help with.

Yes. So Alison, thank you so much for sharing your experiences and giving us some background on the FinOps Foundation. We end every episode of our show by asking our guests what they're excited about doing next. [00:39:00] Alison, what are you excited about doing next? In five weeks time I get to go to Kruger in South Africa.

So I am hugely excited about that. Yeah, very nice. Because I have to say, I love the zebras, and I love the giraffes, and every single one I see, every time I see them I'm like, I love zebras, I love giraffes, and it's a rescheduled holiday that we were meant to go in, in October, so it's been a long time coming, we wish you all the very best, good wine down there in South Africa too. Yeah. And a good exchange rate. Honestly, it's peak. Oh, yeah. It's an excellent exchange rate right now. Awesome. You can have a good time. Yeah. Okay. So a huge thanks to our guests this week. Alison, thank you so much for being on the show.

The production team here in London, thanks to our producer Marcel, our sound and editing wizards, Ben and Louis, and of course, to all of our listeners.

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[00:40:00] another reality next week.

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