Business Practices of Cloud Computing Providers

Tejas Narechania, University of California, Berkeley
Nick Merrill, University of California, Berkeley

The phrase "cloud computing" can refer to any one of a wide range of products and services, from software provisioned as an internet-delivered service to hosted infrastructural solutions. In this comment, we focus specifically on content delivery networks (or CDNs, for short), one sort of infrastructure-as-a-service.

CDNs are systemically important to the modern internet. Specifically, CDNs offer, among other things, content caching and cybersecurity services. The NBA, for example, may enlist a CDN to more efficiently distribute video highlights. The CDN, in turn, will distribute and locate the NBA's data near users likely to request it (e.g., Boston Celtics-related content in Massachusetts, and Golden State Warriors-related content in California), in order to improve the performance of the NBA's web services. The CDN can also provide protection against cyberattacks by monitoring large-scale traffic patterns across its clients and blocking malicious activity targeting anyone (such as, to continue the example, the NBA).