Fin Goulding is Chief Information Officer at Irish Bookmaker Paddy Power, and is speaking at Cloud World Forum at London's Olympia on 24-25 June, about the Cloud and DevOps in his business. We took some time with Fin to talk about the challenges and status of Cloud in his sector, followed by an in-depth discussion on what DevOps means to him personally.

We start off by talking about **some of the challenges of being a CIO in the (largely online) gaming sector**, one of which is that there are major (often sporting) events that happen at certain points in the year, and they have to be ready for those spikes in capacity demand. Another major challenge in the sector is security, about which Fin asserts "we're hyper-concerned about security in our world because we're even more highly regulated than banking". This is largely due to concerns about data loss, particularly in relation to the Cloud. When talking about this, he makes an excellent analogy: "if I put my bike in your house and it's stolen, who's responsible for that loss? It's usually me". This is a primary concern, and one about which Fin and his team have to be super diligent.

Sticking with Cloud technology, and the status of it within his sector, Fin feels that they are on a similar journey to many companies and industries, and that journey entails moving from "credit card Cloud" to "back office Cloud". To elaborate, moving from niche Cloud use cases to IT teams working in a digital world, where they have back office systems (eg. HR, finance, ticketing) that are becoming "cloudified", freeing the team up to spend more time on frontend work.

"But for us, like a number of companies, the next level will be enterprise level cloud, which is really a hybrid. It's a capacity-on-demand model - recovery-as-a-service - or as Joe Baguley of VMware would call it, data center N+1, so that you've actually got this reliability in your production system."

We then move on to what he is looking forward to from Cloud World Forum, which he sees as an opportunity to not only pick up knowledge and tips from elsewhere, but also to give others an insight into his experience to date:

"Leadership is about communication and teaching. My specialism is driving agility in organizations through kind of transformational change or personal change, in particular lean, Kanban, continuous delivery, DevOps, which is all de rigueur at the moment, and application performance management. So I'm looking forward to sharing those topics as a presenter.

But I'm also keen to learn as a participant about other specific cloud used cases from the other organizations that are going there. So I'll have my notebook in hand. I'm hoping to steal a few ideas, come back here, pass them off as my own. I'm looking forward to it; it should be fun".

This leads to a further conversation about DevOps. It's such a hot topic that it has its own, dedicated content theatre at Cloud World Forum; this seemed like a great opportunity to talk to Fin about how DevOps has changed his ways of working.

Firstly, on the status of DevOps at Paddy Power, he expresses his happiness that, while Gartner is describing 2016 as the year of DevOps, PP are halfway through rolling it out, **"so I'm really happy to be ahead of the curve".**

But getting into the nitty-gritty of DevOps, what does it actually mean to him? He responds with passion: "It's about removing some of the barriers between teams such as, for example, developers

and engineers and testers. But having them all work together in small little units, unlike many startups in a large enterprise. I go to stand-ups every day about the progress of our rollout, and it includes everything from lean practices within our business, and Kanban, in the way that we manage the work-in-progress".

It's not just about technology, though, as much as anything it's about cultural change – this is evidenced by Fin's observation that:

"I see people working in IT with smiles in their faces now, because we're removing some of those barriers, those handoffs, those frustrations of being sitting behind a hundred tickets or requests for work. And these individuals are now sitting next to each other and they're making things happen. And a guy said to me yesterday that we had a feature come up from the business on Monday, and we delivered it within three days bug-free. It's because everyone is aligned to making these things an advantage for us in terms of what our organization needs."

It's not easy to roll-out though – what are the change factors that are required? As Fin says, it's hard work to make cultural change in any business, when you're moving people around and getting them to work in different ways. It requires leadership from the top – "it's not like writing a memo and saying 'hey good news, we're all doing DevOps now'".

"You actually have to roll your sleeves up and you have to work through the blockers on a day-to-day basis. But as you've reached the tipping point where everybody gets it, then everyone starts to get involved, and I do see people seeing the benefits of removing frustration from their life".

The conversation then moves on to DevOps tools, to which Fin makes the claim "DevOps is not a set of tools. I'm sorry for the providers of tools that talk about DevOps tools, but they don't necessarily exist". However, "there are tools that have been around for quite some time (particularly open-source tools) that you can use as part of the whole process to streamline the process from idea to production".

"And that is what makes the continuous delivery, continuous integration actually come alive, with people that have the authority to make changes straight away in application, in database, engineering or firewalls or whatever, all seen together"

Thinking about how DevOps will develop in the next few years, it would seem that collaboration is key, not just intra-company, but also inter-company. Fin is keen to help people on that journey, because his team at Paddy Power have had help themselves; for example, they recently spent a day with Spotify, talking about the issues they had in their process, as well as spending lots of time with LinkedIn in the US.

"I think people in this world want to share, because it is the next step towards making IT as a profession much more valuable."

http://www.cloudwf.com