



Cloud Computing Obstacles

There is no doubt that the corporate world's adoption of cloud solutions is on the rise, but some concerns are still holding companies back. Let's consider which obstacles represent valid concerns and which ones are overrated.

Addressing Cloud Critics' Top Five Concerns

Deciding which cloud environment to use for which application depends on a number of factors, including security, privacy, regulatory compliance, cost and scalability.

Security. Although opponents of cloud computing often cite security as a key concern, switching to the cloud may actually improve security. Naturally, this depends on which cloud provider you select, but most of them offer a higher degree of security than your IT department can achieve on its own.

Privacy and confidentiality. This is a much more valid concern. Ensuring that only authenticated users can access the data to which they have access rights is never an easy task, but it can prove to be even more challenging in a cloud environment.

First, because each cloud provider has its own set of Identity and Access Management (IAM) procedures, the process of managing identities is likely to become much more complex in the cloud.

Second, when your data is in the cloud, you can no longer control how it is accessed, edited or retrieved without the consent of the cloud provider, and this cannot always be taken for granted.

Third, data in the cloud can be subject to a variety of different laws depending on the locations where it is stored, processed and transmitted, and even on the nationality of the cloud provider. Furthermore, it is not uncommon for data to be processed across multiple jurisdictions, so identifying the applicable laws is often a tricky business.

Privacy and confidentiality should be treated as real concerns, especially if you handle sensitive data in a regulated industry, such as health care or financial services. However, with proper planning and the help of an expert in the IAM aspects of cloud computing, you can usually find a satisfactory solution, whether it is a private cloud with more robust IAM processes, or a public cloud under the strictures of a very specific Service Level Agreement.

Cost. Cloud computing skeptics typically argue that although the cloud model may be cheaper than on-premises options when considering only the first couple of years, over time the cloud can be more expensive. Remember that in accounting terms, there is no benefit available in the form of capitalizing and amortizing fixed computing assets. Although all this may be true, cost savings will vary greatly depending on the size of your organization, the type of service you need, and the actual usage.

But don't limit your analysis to upfront costs and cost projections. If you want to compare apples to apples, you need to estimate your total cost of ownership. Some costs such as licensing and hardware are easy to quantify, but you should also take into account benefits such as productivity increases, enhanced organizational agility, reduced IT staff, and quicker deployment of new technologies. It may be more difficult to assign a dollar value to these less-tangible benefits, but they are nevertheless real and sometimes quite significant.



The true benefits of the cloud

Lack of support. Cloud critics tend to generalize that cloud providers offer limited or no support options. In practice, though, these support options vary greatly from one cloud provider to the next. They also depend on the plan to which you subscribe. You might consider contracting supplementary support services from a cloud specialist. Responsive support is important, but it can only be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Putting IT jobs in jeopardy. Whenever there is change, there is resistance to change. IT professionals who have deep expertise with on-premises computing may be reluctant to move operations into the cloud and may find all sorts of reasons to delay the transition, for fear of losing control or even losing their jobs. But the reality is that while the nature of their jobs will probably change, those jobs are unlikely to be eliminated. In fact, at the other end of the enthusiasm spectrum, some IT professionals are quite excited about the cloud, because they see the opportunity to focus their time and efforts on more strategic projects or adopt new technologies more rapidly.

While cloud computing is not a perfect model, you should realize that many of the concerns slowing the adoption of cloud computing can be addressed with proper planning.

Let us help you design a workable strategy to securely deploy and integrate cloud services.



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