

WHY DO PEOPLE USE THE CLOUD?

Introduction

If you pay even a marginal degree of attention to the news, then you know that everyone's constantly abuzz about the merits of cloud computing. Journalists throw buzzwords left and right, babbling about how the cloud is essential for business agility and scaling up and out. Today, we're going to sort through all that nonsense, and take a look at the truth beneath all the buzz.

In other words, we're going to look at **what** makes the cloud so formidable, and **why** people use it. What is it about cloud computing that's made the technology so popular amongst small businesses and enterprises alike? And how can you use it within your own organization?

We'll start by quashing a few of the most common myths related to cloud computing.

Three Cloud Computing Myths That Need Busting

You'd be hard pressed to find someone who'd argue that the cloud hasn't come a long way in terms of both technology and acceptance. Today, it's widely understood that cloud computing offers game-changing advantages to whatever business knows to use it. At the same time, there exist a number of oddly-persistent myths, bandied about by people who should honestly know better.

Private is inherently more secure than public

This one of the most absurd right out the door - the distinction between private and public is functionally irrelevant where breaches are concerned. As a matter of fact, a breach is actually even likelier to occur in a private cloud, due to complacency on the part of the folks spreading this misinformation around. Ultimately, security is either built into a system and the processes around it or it isn't.

Whether or not a cloud is public or private won't change that.

The cloud is all about vendor lock-in

Platform vendors love lock-in. It's been the way of things forever: proprietary systems that make it inherently expensive to move to other solutions. Some cloud vendors tried this trick in the early days, but standards won out, and now cloud vendors make a big deal about openness.

If a cloud vendor attempts to lock you into a contract, walk the other way. They're the minority. What's more, there's probably a good reason they can't retain clients without a contract.



The cloud is non-compliant

This is one of those myths that used to hold a grain of truth - but it's far from true now. In its early days, cloud vendors were all about convenience, cost, and scalability. Regulated organizations took a look and said "that's very clever, but we need compliance, too." The vendors listened.

Today, there are clouds that comply with most regulatory frameworks: HIPAA, PCI, SSAE16, and so on. The cloud is not inherently non-compliant; it's just that some cloud platforms are non-compliant.

These myths will all die away in time - no doubt replaced by new ones in short order. Now that we've dispelled them ourselves, it's time we move on. Let's talk a bit about one of the most common cloud use cases: apps.

Four Reasons Companies Choose To Deploy Applications In The Cloud

If you've been around the corporate IT world for a while, you'll no doubt have fond — or not so fond — memories of software rollouts and updates; the tedious process of managing the installation or patching of software across hundreds or thousands of desktop machines. It was a massively expensive and time-consuming process, even with rollout automation tools.

The cloud has largely consigned rollouts of that sort to the garbage can of IT history. Applications deployed in the cloud are updated once, and then available everywhere. Of course, it's not quite as straightforward as that, but it's a good deal simpler than it was in the past.

Easy rollouts and upgrades are not the only benefit of deploying SaaS applications on IaaS platforms, mind you. There are plenty of others, as well.

Portability And Mobility

The advent of BYOD and the mobile revolution have forced companies to rethink their software development and deployment strategies. Traditional deployment models are, to put it bluntly, obsolete. The cloud's showed us a better way.

By deploying applications on a cloud platform, they effectively become device agnostic. Any reasonably modern device with a web browser can access web applications and most smartphone variants can be covered with iOS and Android apps. In essence, it's a return to the old days of thin clients and centralized servers, but with vastly more power and flexibility.

Security

That deploying applications onto third-party platforms is more secure may seem counter-intuitive at first. After all, businesses control the devices they own, right? No...they really don't. Employees do. End users do. And the sad fact is, they aren't smart with their own data - so why would they be smart with yours?

By moving data and the applications that use it into the cloud, companies can exert direct control over access and security. There's little chance of an employee leaving a company's sensitive data on the train, because it is held in a secure repository, access to which can be withdrawn at the company's discretion.



Interoperability

Because cloud applications all “live” on the same platform, it’s much easier to create integrations between them. There are numerous examples of how synergies can be developed between cloud applications that increase productivity and efficiency. Here are a few examples:

- Software PBX systems can be integrated with customer relationship management systems
- Calendars can be shared between email applications and CRM
- Call recording software can be integrated with an EMM deployment
- Salesfloor software can be integrated with database software

The potential integrations are endless, and much more easily implemented on the cloud than with installed applications.

Scalability

This is the one that’s always named as the major benefit of deploying Software-as-a-Service applications on Infrastructure-as-a-Service platforms. IaaS allows for effortless, automated, inexpensive, on-demand scalability so that resources are always available and track the needs of your business, while SaaS allows some of the resource demands that might be incurred by traditional applications to be offloaded to the cloud.

It really is a match made in heaven.

So...alright. The cloud offers some great benefits, sure. But how does any of this translate to real-world gains?

Let’s talk about that.



80% Of US SMEs Say The Cloud Contributes To Business Growth

In a [recent report](#) from the Techaisle market research organization, it was revealed that 80% of small and medium enterprises consider cloud technology in its various forms to be beneficial for business growth. They gave a number of different reasons for their belief, which varied based on the size of the business and the market it addressed.

40% of respondents said that business agility and new capabilities were the driving force behind their adoption of the cloud. While many business leaders were at first doubtful as to the cloud's benefits compared to more traditional deployments, opinions have softened as the real-world, tangible benefits of cloud platforms have become apparent.

Among smaller SMEs in the 1-99 employee bracket, business agility was the primary motivation mentioned in the survey, but it was closely followed by the ability to develop capabilities that would otherwise have been prohibitively expensive.

In the mid-market range, companies with 100-999 employees also cited agility and business outcomes, but their major motivation for cloud adoption was an increase in the efficiency of IT staff. 60% of mid-market SMEs cited improved productivity through increased efficiency as a leading driver of their move to the cloud.

Conclusion

Cloud computing may well be one of the most paradigm-shattering innovations of the past century. Now that it's managed to get past its initial growing pains, it's catching on like wildfire, and being used by businesses small and large. Now that you've seen a brief overview of why the cloud has everyone so excited, there's only one question left to ask:

Why aren't you using it yet?

