

NEWSLETTER



WHAT IS CLOUD COMPUTING? WHERE IS THE CLOUD?

What is the Cloud? And Where is it?

There has been a ton of talk about the cloud. Cloud this, cloud that. But what actually IS the cloud? It's okay if you don't know, most people don't understand it and even some tech people tend to wave their hands towards the sky when trying to explain it!

Since it actually has nothing to do with the white fluffy things in the sky, let's lay it all out:

Cloud computing is about storing and retrieving your data (personal or business) within your own piece of the internet. It's so you can access it from anywhere, just like you do a web page, and it won't matter if your office is closed and you're squeezing in a little work on your phone at midnight. Everything will be saved and ready to pick up when you get back to your desk. Colleagues in different locations can even collaborate on documents in real time.

If that all sounds a bit futuristic, think about how an email service like Gmail works. None of your emails are actually being stored on your hard drive or device, they're stored on the Gmail server and you can access them anytime you like.

Your read/send/receive changes are applied instantly, remembered for next time you log in. This is a form of cloud computing. So is Netflix, where you

can stream movies and TV shows on demand. All the video is actually stored on a computer somewhere else in the world and sent to your device in tiny pieces as you watch it. Netflix remembers what you watched, where you got up to, and even if you're hopping immediately from one device to another, it still has it all ready to go.

Where is 'cloud' data stored?

Good question. And it's why the term 'cloud' causes so much confusion. The data absolutely must be physically stored somewhere. Companies who offer cloud storage have huge warehouses dedicated to holding servers whose sole job is to send and receive data all day. And by huge, we mean HUGE.

You could get lost walking the rows of servers, just box after box for what seems like forever. The biggest server farms or 'cloud campuses' are still growing, but to give you an idea: they can be upwards of *1million square feet*. It's big business, literally.

In terms of location, the US and UK are popular server farm locations, but the company could also have copies of your data stored elsewhere in the world. This is so they can fulfill their redundancy guarantees – if disaster hits one location, the other still has a copy.

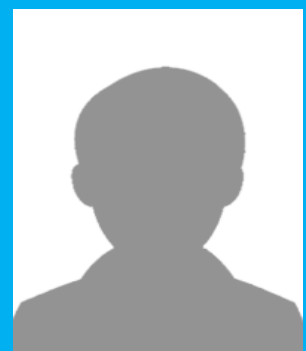
Having additional locations and copies also increases the speed of access. With some companies, you can choose your preferred location so that data doesn't have to travel quite as far across the world, increasing speed even further, which of course, saves time and money. Collaboration, security, redundancy, AND savings? We'd call that a win.



Ready to take advantage of cloud computing?

Give us a call at 0113 2579992.

In this issue, learn about how cloud computing works. And then know when is the right time for your business to take advantage of this technology.



When is the right time to move your business computing to the cloud?

When is Your Business Ready to Move to the Cloud?

By now you know that the cloud isn't going away any time soon. In fact, cloud computing has become a natural step in business growth, thanks to the numerous (and continually growing) benefits. More and more applications are coming out in web-based form and staff are exceptionally comfortable with this type of change. So when is the right time to move your business computing to the cloud?

Many businesses are facing this question now that cloud computing has become a mainstream norm. After all, you'll be able to roll out new apps in days, not weeks, and nobody ever says 'no thanks' to increased security and efficiency. Like any strategic business decision though, timing is everything. Here's how to assess your need before you make the switch:

1. Age of servers and workstations

If your workstations and servers are reaching their end of life and a large capital investment is coming up, you'll be able to minimize the expense by moving to the cloud. You may even be able to skip certain upgrades completely. Your staff will still need devices to access the cloud data, but you'll have a lot more flexibility in your choice and they won't need to be as powerful. This can be a huge cost saving made in just moments.



2. Need for remote and mobile access

Many businesses are growing while on the move, with a mobile workforce needing to access files from anywhere at any time. This could range from moving around the one location, between offices or even working from home. Forget frustrating connections and lost productivity, cloud computing allows staff to work securely and efficiently from any location with internet access.

3. Current support setup

If your business currently outsources all your network management, you're perfectly suited for the move to cloud computing. Network maintenance and monitoring becomes a non-issue, handled 24/7 as part of your cloud service. Network efficiency just keeps rising too, as your cloud provider is always improving their systems. You'll find problems are fixed before you knew they existed, and server downtime becomes a thing of the past.

4. Need for predictable IT costs

If it feels like IT costs can spiral out of control at times, challenging your budget and patience, cloud computing will seem like a dream come true. When you make this shift, you're moving from a capital expense to an operational one – server and system

replacements are no longer your concern. You'll be able to budget for IT costs in advance, knowing no blowouts are hiding around the corner. Monthly costs are known and (usually) capped based on what you use, leaving your cash flow much relieved.

Today's cloud computing is more advanced, secure and priced more competitively than ever before. At its core, cloud computing is purely about doing things better, and it can have a massive impact on your profits, productivity and even staff satisfaction rates. If your business requires a robust, always available infrastructure with easy monthly costs, it's time to take a serious look at your cloud computing options.



We offer a variety of cloud services to help your business. Give us a call at 0113 2579992 to discuss how we can improve your business IT.