

What is Cloud Computing?

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What is the "Cloud"?

It's simply the overarching term to refer to the use of a network (or an internet connection) to access, store, and manage data, rather than using a computer's hard drive.

Chances are, you're already using Cloud Computing

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Whether you use an online email provider, a document storage service, or a project management system, you're already using the cloud.

Even a suite of office tools, like Google Docs, which enables you to create and collaborate on documents in real time, are fully cloud-based.

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Increasingly, Cloud Computing isn't just an option, it's the default

The old days

Take the rise of SaaS (Software as a Service): instead of the old days, when you'd buy a physical piece of software, install (and own) it, now software is increasingly accessed through the "Cloud" and paid for like a subscription.

Now

Advantages?

No more outdated versions, no physical things to store, replace, etc. → no need to go to a Bricks and Mortar store to purchase anything. Everything is accessible via an internet connection.

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Is the Cloud Safe?

Like anything, there will always be risks. But they can be mitigated by taking security seriously and implementing basic precautionary measures.

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Who uses the Cloud? The short answer: almost everyone.

Among big corporations, the numbers are overwhelming, and they're all moving in the same direction: up, up, up.

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Cloud Computing ROI

Stats you can't ignore

The latest research is conclusive. The cloud is here to stay, and with good reason: it's good for business.

Nucleus Research found that:³

Cloud applications deliver

1.7x (\$)

more ROI than on-premise ones

Four out of five cloud deployments

deliver increasing benefits over time

Companies deploying cloud applications spend

40%

less on consulting

25%

less on support

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What about Small Businesses?

Small Businesses are best positioned to leverage its strengths: they're more flexible, they're more likely NOT to have an existing IT department to replace, and they're more agile when it comes to embracing innovation.

2014

37% of Small Businesses have fully adapted to the cloud

by 2020

78% of Small Businesses forecasted to be fully adapted to the cloud⁴

Working from home = Happier Employees

Employees who work from home...

80%

...report better work/life balance & fewer sick days

76%

...are more loyal to their company⁵

Environmental advantage of working from home is also significant: telecommuting on the whole saves 9-14B kW hours/year; equivalent to taking 20K cars off the road.⁶

Mobile Workplace: the Bottom-line

Seized Opportunity

When you move to the Cloud, new markets open up to you. Outstanding business opportunity... but it's in Barcelona? Suddenly that's doable.

Increased Productivity

From conference calls to working collaboratively on documents to managing your team remotely – that puts you, and your business at a competitive advantage.

Faster Growth

With the Cloud, you can have the technology of a huge corporation, grow faster without investing in an in-house IT team and the corresponding infrastructure.

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Convinced? Here's how to get started.

1 Start small

Almost all applications offer free versions that give you a preview of the service before needing to upgrade.

2 Streamline your applications

While cloud-based applications are generally cost effective, they can add up. Make sure you're not over-subscribing on Cloud-Based applications.

3 Make sure everyone's on the same page

Switching to a new vendor? Everyone needs to know that's the new protocol – so factor in some re-training time.

4 Set aside a budget

Cloud Computing is very accessible, but it's not free, and there is a learning curve. Set budget time and money to get on top of things, and then make sure you stay in the loop by reading up on industry trends and staying abreast of service updates.

5 Understand the real threats

Employee mistakes represented 59% of security breaches in the last year.⁷ Implement regular security training and make use of available Password Protection applications.

Trademarks and disclaimers

¹ <http://www.cio.com/article/2922374/cloud-security/20-of-the-greatest-myths-of-cloud-security.html>
² IDC Market Analysis Perspective: Worldwide SaaS and Cloud Software
³ Nucleus Research: Cloud delivers 1.7 times more ROI
⁴ PricewaterhouseCoopers: Small Business success in the cloud
⁵ Staples Advantage Survey: There's No Place Like a Home Office
⁶ CEA Study: The Energy and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Impacts of Telecommuting and e-Commerce
⁷ Experian Data Breach Resolution: 2015 Data Breach Industry Forecast

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