To Cloud or Not?, Part 2

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This is part two of a two-part piece. Part one can be found here *[1].* *[2]*

True Cloud (Software-as-a-Service) Solutions

When compared to on-premise and hosted solutions, the operational and economic benefits of true cloud services are compelling. True SaaS platforms provide businesses with the ability to use the cloud solution provider's application running on a cloud infrastructure that may be owned and managed by either a data center or partially by the cloud solution provider itself. The applications are web-accessible from a variety of client devices yielding anytime, anywhere, mobile access.

The cloud solution provider or the data center, or a combination of both, perform all of the hardware and software maintenance, as well as management of the underlying cloud infrastructure, including network, servers, operating systems, storage and application capabilities, with the possible exception of limited user-specific application configuration settings. The customer can scale up or down without pain or extra expense.

Cloud services eliminate the long-term commitment, unnecessary expenses, and inefficiencies of both hosted and on-premise solutions, while offering simplicity, scalability and cost-effective operation. In addition, true cloud solutions free precious IT resources and support disaster recovery of valuable corporate data, which can assist companies in meeting customer requirements and compliance regulations.

Companies benefit from the removal of all capex and opex costs associated with the on-premise and hosted solutions. Equally important, the company is not distracted from focusing on its core responsibility — growing the business.

The term cloud computing can be ambiguous, and not all cloud services are created equal. There are significant differences among architectures of the various cloud offerings. As described, hosted services are often inaccurately described as “cloud solutions,” but they lack some of the elements that make true cloud computing so compelling. Mainly, these hosted solutions lack truly shared resources, and the ability to scale up or down painlessly.

Businesses worldwide are moving to cloud computing and the real-time true cloud is driving the adoption rate because of the undeniable business benefits, which include:

1. Cost-effectiveness: Businesses that use cloud applications reduce costs on many different levels — IT hardware and software expenditures are eliminated, and no additional staff or support resources are needed for IT maintenance and management.
2. Ease of implementation: Moving to the cloud is simple. There is no need to provision hardware and software resources, or spend time on installation and setup. Companies can be up and running quickly and efficiently.
3. Improved productivity: A key benefit of a true cloud solution is that employees can access applications and data 24/7 from any location. The mobility and flexibility of cloud solutions yield maximum productivity.
4. On-the-fly scalability: The flexibility to scale up or down to meet the needs of the business with a user-based pay-as-you-go service allows businesses to easily increase their cloud usage as the business grows, or decrease spending if the business needs to scale down temporarily.
5. Disaster recovery: True cloud solutions provide improved business resilience. The cloud not only offers 24/7 access and operation, but also built-in redundancies to ensure information is always protected and available. This means less downtime than when managing IT in house, plus increased compliance with regulatory mandates.
6. Environmental friendliness: True cloud solutions use less energy than traditional models, which is important for cost savings and social responsibility. The energy efficiency comes from utilizing shared resources.

For a manufacturer considering a move to the cloud, it is critical to weigh customization requirements against the cloud’s affordability and ease of implementation. It is important to note that, in the case of true cloud solutions, low customizability does not necessarily mean no customization or integration capabilities: Many cloud solutions are designed to integrate seamlessly with the various enterprise resource planning (ERP), content management system (CMS) and document management applications that a manufacturer already has in place, thus providing a degree of control that rivals the customizability of an on-premise infrastructure.

To read part one of this two-part series, please click here. *[3] What's your take? Please feel free to comment below! For more information, please visit* *www.docassist.us* [4].

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