Is the Cloud Right for Your Business?

5 Reasons to Conquer the Cloud

What is the Cloud?

Despite the increasing pace of cloud adoption, the many types of cloud computing available can create confusion in the marketplace. And, indeed, not all clouds are created equal. We've taken all of the mystery away and have created an easy-to-use reference guide. Use the glossary below to assist you in determining the best solution for your business.

TYPES OF CLOUDS

Three types of cloud infrastructures make it possible for companies to find the right level of control based on the degree of complexity required to serve their business's computing needs.

1. **Public:** Public clouds are managed by a service provider and offered as a service over the internet.

2. **Private:** Private clouds are managed in house and characterized by dedicated hardware that lives on a private network.

3. **Hybrid:** A combination of a private cloud with some public cloud services.

> Cloud computing offers unmatched cost efficiency, flexibility, and speed of new service delivery. To take advantage of this trend, new cloud providers are springing up overnight and traditional IT vendors are quickly expanding their offerings to provide cloud services. With a growing array of service providers to choose from, many companies don't know where to start looking or are paralyzed by choice. Others have assembled a patchwork of cloud services that omits their business-critical applications and ERP systems. To be competitive now and in the future, these companies will need a cloud strategy that puts their business-critical applications first.

TYPES OF PUBLIC CLOUD SERVICES

Dig a little deeper and you'll find that there is a cloud service for virtually every workload. Public cloud services tend to fall into one of three categories:

1. **Software as a Service (SaaS)**

Software as a service uses cloud technology to serve up specific software products over the internet. SaaS providers do not offer solutions for all workloads; rather, they offer point solutions that integrate into your existing infrastructure. The most successful SaaS application on the market is Salesforce.com.

2. **Commodity Cloud Services**

For organizations with little or no complexity in their IT environments, commodity cloud services offer a network with virtual servers from which to run their systems. Commodity cloud services are ideal for productivity applications (Word, Excel, etc.) as well as e-commerce sites and large web server farms that require little attention or maintenance. Amazon Web Services (AWS) is the largest provider of commodity cloud services today.

3. **Custom Cloud Services**

Custom cloud providers focus on migrating business critical applications, including SQL, Oracle and legacy applications of all types to the cloud. Network and server hosting is included, and all applications are delivered via a virtual desktop infrastructure from the Internet. Custom cloud services are ideal for companies that want to deploy virtual desktops, ERP systems and centralize core business applications. Zumasys is a custom cloud service provider.

5 Top Reasons Companies Move to the Cloud

1 | INCREASED RELIABILITY

The more a company matures, the less downtime it can tolerate. At some point, every executive will have to ask, "How do I make my business systems more reliable?"

Traditional IT environments with one-to-one servers (i.e., one application per physical server) can leave businesses vulnerable to potentially devastating periods of downtime. If even a single server goes down, it could take three to five days to procure a new server, set it up, install the OS, implement patches to the OS, and load the software. If that server is running a primary business system or core application, those three to five days could be devastating to a company's operations, reputation, and bottom line.

Geographically distributed organizations face this problem many times over. If an organization has multiple branches that are all dependent on the availability of its main office data center, all it has to do is lose power in its main building to shut down the users in every branch of the company.

Does cloud computing eliminate the possibility of unplanned downtime? No. The idea that the cloud is a place in which servers never go down is a myth. Outages occur, parts fail, disasters strike, and mistakes happen. When those disruptions do occur however the cloud is how you shorten the time is takes to get back online, sometimes to just a couple seconds or minutes.

With cloud computing, companies of every size can affordably implement business continuity and dramatically speed the time to recovery. Many cloud providers provide uptime guarantees that exceed what most businesses can achieve with an on-site installation. Redundant layers of power protection, fire protection, physical security, heating and cooling, and internet can eliminate many of the most common sources of unplanned downtime, including downtime as a result of earthquakes, fire, power loss, and theft.

Data replication to a secondary data center can provide an extra level of security. If a major disaster were to occur at the primary data center, a copy of the data would be available from the secondary site and able to be brought back online as needed.

SIGNS THAT IT'S TIME TO CONSIDER THE CLOUD:

- You cannot afford for your main application to be down for three to five days
- At least 25% of your workforce is outside of your main headquarters or primary location
- You are not confident in your current business continuity or disaster recovery plan

2 | LOWER TOTAL COST OF OWNERSHIP

Every three to five years, companies face the costly and time-consuming task of refreshing their computers, servers, and storage area networks. Although cloud computing offers an alternative to the large, recurring capital expenditures required by the tech refresh cycle, many companies remain tied to their hardware by underestimating the true cost of their on-site IT infrastructure.

In fact, the true cost of an on-site solution is far more than that of the initial investment; it includes ongoing costs for management and maintenance, such as IT administration, training, backup, disaster recovery, software patches and updates, support contracts, and equipment warranties. Factoring in hidden costs and operational expenditures, the long-term total cost of ownership of an on-site solution can often be greater than that of an equivalent cloud solution. Gartner estimates that cloud computing can reduce IT expenses by 50% in a 5-year period.

With every technical refresh, it can cost a fortune just to maintain the status quo. Moving to the cloud makes it possible to make a jump in technology without those large capital expenditures. The pay-per-use model of cloud services rolls all of the costs of buying and maintaining an on-site infrastructure into a predictable monthly pricing structure that lets companies scale resources up or down as needs change. Pay-per-use pricing spreads IT costs out over time, mitigates risk, and makes it affordable for companies of every size and budget to access enterprise-class capabilities, including data protection and disaster recovery.

For many small to medium sized businesses, building a secondary data center for high availability or disaster recovery is simply out of the question. Building one data center is costly enough— without the additional expense of building a second one that may never be used. Data protection as a service allows companies to pay only for the resources they use improves data availability with faster, more frequent backups, all while freeing up IT staff . Disaster recovery as a service makes it possible to be up and running quickly in the event of a primary-site disaster without having to build a secondary data center.

Leading cloud providers are also constantly refreshing their infrastructure with the most cutting-edge equipment on the market. Because upgrades and migrations can take place with no disruptions in service or change in monthly costs, cloud computing enables companies of all sizes to access the latest technologies without having to purchase the equipment with valuable capital.

SIGNS THAT IT'S TIME TO CONSIDER THE CLOUD:

- You're tired of spending capital on IT equipment that is increasing in complexity and total cost of ownership
- Your IT budget is being spent on maintenance of existing systems and leaving little for upgrades and improvements
- Your business demands access to the latest technology

"Zumasys has long been our application and network support partner because they provide top-tier data security and continuous uptime while removing the responsibility of maintaining our IT infrastructure from our in-house staff."

– **KEN WERTZ**, President, Wilkinson Supply Co.

3 | ABILITY TO FOCUS IT RESOURCES ON CORE BUSINESS

Cloud computing is contributing to a major cultural shift that is changing the way businesses value IT personnel. Traditional IT implementations can consume IT resources with low-level tasks, such as desktop support, backup verification and monitoring, load balancing, equipment requisitions and purchases, monitoring power and cooling, and negotiating bandwidth. IT administrators may spend days each week just confirming backups or reacting to the latest IT emergency.

Desktop support alone can consume high percentages of valuable IT resources as individual desktops are not only costly, they are vulnerable to mailicious software, loss and theft — requiring countless hours of support services.

Cloud services make it possible to automate and outsource low-level IT tasks and free IT experts to focus on enabling business initiatives and optimizing processes. The "IT person" is now valued more than ever as a strategic advisor who can align IT to the objectives of the business. For companies without a full-time IT resource, cloud computing can offer the resources of a fully staffed IT department at a price that a small to midsize business can afford.

Desktop as a service (DaaS) can dramatically reduce support requirements, saving time and money. Deployment of new desktops is practically instantaneous, and software upgrades are performed by the service provider and pushed live to the entire organization. Stringent access controls and security measures make recovering from malicious software as easy as rebooting the desktop.

SIGNS THAT IT'S TIME TO CONSIDER THE CLOUD:

- Your IT resources are consumed by low-value tasks, such as backups and maintenance
- You do not have IT resources on staff but need all the benefits of a full-time staff

4 | FLEXIBILITY TO SCALE IT RESOURCES UP OR DOWN ON DEMAND

When it comes to buying hardware in the corporate IT space, it can be difficult to plan ahead. Companies are faced with a difficult choice: either buy exactly what they need or over-purchase to allow for growth.

Neither of those plans will work exactly as predicted. Companies that buy just enough may find that in nine months they have reached the limits of their infrastructure and/or performance degrades for critical applications. Because they can't expand, they have to spend more money sooner than expected. The majority of companies will opt for the second option and plan for growth, purchasing extra data center space, racks, cooling, power, data circuits for internet connectivity, and software licenses. They have to grow or risk sitting on excess capacity that they have no use for.

With the cloud, companies don't have to know exactly where they're going to be in three years. They can instantly scale up or down, adding a single server or 200 servers on demand. Because their systems are hosted on a shared, consolidated platform built for multiple customers, it's easy for the cloud provider to quickly add or remove resources. As a result, monthly costs scale linearly and predictably with business requirements.

SIGNS THAT IT'S TIME TO CONSIDER THE CLOUD:

- Management wants a predictable monthly IT expenditure
- Economic, industry or business influences require flexibility when planning for future IT requirements
- You need IT to help you quickly adapt to your business' changing requirements

"We chose Zumasys to be an extension of our IT staff. We need a partner that can provide the most up-to-date scalable solutions today AND prepare our organization for the technology that is in the pipeline for tomorrow, next week, and next year."

– **MERRILL CAUSEY**, CFO, Index Fresh

5 | FREEDOM TO ACCESS DATA ANYTIME, ANYWHERE, FROM ANY DEVICE

Gartner calls the bring your own device (BYOD) movement "the single most radical shift in the economics of client computing since PCs invaded the workplace." BYOD means that employees can access corporate applications from any personally selected device with an internet connection from anywhere in the world. These devices don't belong to the company, they belong to the employee and store a mix of personal and corporate data.

The BYOD movement is being driven largely by the rise of smart phones and tablets. Employees are bringing to work their own notebooks, smartphone and tablets and expect to be able to access their corporate data from those devices. Today, some companies will even reimburse users for their device or their service costs.

Users like bringing their own device because it gives them greater choice and simultaneous access to personal and corporate data. Employers like it because it has the potential to boost productivity of workers by enabling them to choose when, where, and how they work. It can also help companies lower costs by eliminating the need for the acquisition and set up of full desktop computers at every location. But it can also pose complex challenges. Employers require predictability, standardization, access control, and security, which can be in direct conflict with the employee's feeling of ownership.

Moving to a cloud environment can help companies manage risk while embracing the BYOD movement. Virtual desktops contain all the apps and data users need and will run on every smart phone, tablet, or personal computer. Cloud-based environments can address the security concerns that challenge the BYOD movement. Companies that plan ahead for this shift may be able to improve productivity and gain an edge over the competition.

SIGNS THAT IT'S TIME TO CONSIDER THE CLOUD:

- BYOD is becoming a priority for your business, but your IT systems are unable to support secure data access from any device
- Offering BYOD would help you find and retain top talent in your industry
- Being able to deliver desktops securely through an internet browser is a goal for your company

The Rise of the Cloud

Over the last five years, cloud computing has gone from being a mysterious technology of the future to one of the hottest, most sought-after technologies of today. In Gartner's 2012 survey of IT executives, CIOs ranked cloud computing as their third-highest technology priority. In 2008—just four years earlier—cloud wasn't even on the survey.[1]

Although the hype is wearing off, cloud computing has quickly proven itself to be a source of unparalleled reliability, cost efficiency, and business agility. Today, it's no longer a question if your company will move to the cloud, it's simply a question of when. Every organization will make different decisions about when and how to take advantage of the benefits provided by cloud computing. Our goal is to help you determine how the cloud can benefit your company, and whether it is right for your business today.

CONCLUSION

Today, more than 11,000 users across North America access their data and applications in the Zumasys cloud. Here are just a few of the reasons why:

- A pioneer in cloud computing, Zumasys has led the way in cloud services since 2006.

- Our production systems are housed in the world's most efficient, high-density, ultra-scale data center, the Switch SuperNAP in Las Vegas, Nevada. Data is replicated to the Savvis data center in Irvine, California.

- Zumasys provides 24/7 support every day of the year with no outsourcing.

- We provide custom cloud offerings for your business-critical applications and unique business requirements.

- We partner with leading technology vendors, such as NetApp, Cisco, VMware, and Citrix, to provide flexible, rental licensing; maximum performance for ERP systems; and an overall enterprise-class computing experience at an affordable price.

"Zumasys has been our network consultant of choice for the past five years. Their staff of engineers and technicians has always been there for critical issues and projects and has done a very good job. When we decided to move to the cloud, Zumasys was the obvious solution. They understood our current environment, and I had complete confidence they knew how to make it all work in the cloud environment. I think we had one of the smoothest migrations on record, but maybe I'm just bragging!!"

– **KATE AGOITIA**, Director of IT, Skyview Cooling

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ABOUT ZUMASYS

Zumasys helps companies of every size elevate their business by transitioning their infrastructure and applications to the cloud. Our personalized approach to cloud computing means we take the time to listen to our customers, understand their business objectives, and develop a customized solution that accommodates any application.

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[1] Gartner, Amplifying the Enterprise: The 2012 CIO Agenda, January 2012: http://www.gartner.com/newsroom/id/1897514

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