



What is *Cloud*?

Overview

For many years, organisations have installed computerised solutions on site, or not at all. Today, small- to medium-sized organisations are seriously considering the provision of those solutions on Cloud-based implementations as they come to recognise that Cloud computing functionality is comparable to on-premise solutions—and more cost effective.

Cloud computing requires companies to pay only a monthly fee for just the application services they use rather than requiring them to install costly hardware and software and hire experienced IT staff.

What is cloud computing?

Cloud computing delivers a new way for organisations to gain access to software applications.

Typically, organisations have purchased and installed servers in house, installed software on those servers, and purchased licenses for each employee. With Cloud computing, organisations access application technologies and computing power on-demand from internet "clouds" that furnish the server and software in a data centre. The Cloud is enabled by virtualisation technology that consolidates hardware to improve efficiency and makes it easier and less expensive to deliver on-demand computing resources.

Because of tight budgets, IT managers are looking for more affordable ways to access sophisticated software solutions. Cloud computing applications reduce capital costs. They are also easier to use and deploy, reducing the time it takes for organisations to use them to meet specific business needs, and lowering the total cost of ownership (TCO).

Organisations also realise that previous objections to Cloud computing no longer ring true. For example, one common misperception has been that on-premise solutions offer greater functionality. Today, many computerised solutions offer identical functionality in both Cloud and on-premise solutions. Users of Cloud solutions even have the option to tailor systems, configure screens to user roles and preferences, and use only the modules that are needed.

Security of data and applications hosted by a third party has also long been a critical concern. Cloud solutions have responded by delivering high levels of security and reliability. Cloud solutions offer password protection. Data is stored in central, off-site locations to reduce vulnerability to theft and natural disasters. The vendor takes care of daily and monthly backups and restores. Service level agreements (SLAs) guarantee reliability, availability and performance.

Even as organisations are more amenable to Cloud deployments, many also expect flexibility. At one point in the organisation's development, it might prefer a Cloud implementation for its unique benefits; at other times it may prefer an on-premise solution. Alternatively, different subsidiaries or departments might require a different delivery solution.

An organisation may prefer a Cloud implementation if: -

- It does not want to invest or support an IT infrastructure;
- It prefers to make one monthly payment;
- It wants to match internal costs against fluctuating business conditions;
- It wants to be up and running quickly and without building remote access to an existing network.

An organisation could choose an on-premise solution if: -

- There is a need for a high degree of customisation;
- It has the ability to confidently make a 5 year commitment to a software investment;
- It already has a network infrastructure that can support multiple geographic sites.

An organisation might opt to move to a Cloud infrastructure if: -

- Their existing IT equipment is reaching the end of their warranty periods and financial conditions exist which restrain the ability to re-invest in the latest technology;
- There are needs to update to and comply with the requirements of the latest software without having to upgrade existing users equipment;
- Their existing IT resource is limited or not fully trained in all the aspects of managing modern IT functionality;
- Instead of installing and using software installed on a local PC, a 'thin client' approach is preferred where software and data is accessed over the internet – and the software runs on powerful servers that are not dependent upon local area network speeds, network capacity, or the processing speed of individual PCs;
- Ongoing maintenance costs need to be reduced because the Cloud vendor performs ongoing maintenance centrally (as part of the service contract) rather than having to upgrade individual machines;
- By outsourcing IT headaches to a third party, organisations can focus on what they do best.

An organisation should never consider a Cloud infrastructure if the number of internet users cannot be properly supported within affordable broadband connections.

About Ashgoal

Ashgoal are a certified Citrix Partner and were established in 1979. For more details contact Ashgoal on 08442 459100 or email sales@ashgoal.com or visit www.ashgoal.com

Call: **08442 459100**

Visit: **www.ashgoal.com**

