THE CASE FOR THE CLOUD

The cloud has revolutionised the way we do business.

In fact, it's arguably the most radical innovation in information technology since the internet itself.

entrustIT
Europe

Steve Jobs made the following statement in 1997; 15 years before the cloud actually arrived on the scene:

> *I don't need a hard disk in my computer if I can get to the server faster... carrying around these non-connected computers is byzantine by comparison.*
>
> **Steve Jobs, Co-founder, Chairman and CEO of Apple (1997)**

But with technological advances comes concern and fear. So this whitepaper is designed to paint the bigger picture, allay any fears, and give you all the facts you need to make an informed decision about the right IT solution for your business.

WHAT IS 'THE CLOUD'?

It's a buzzword that many people use, but few of us properly understand.

But it isn't particularly complicated: 'the cloud' simply refers to software and services that run on the internet, instead of locally on your computer. Most cloud services can be accessed through your normal web browser, like Firefox or Google Chrome, and some companies offer dedicated mobile apps.

Here are some examples of cloud services that you may have heard of:

Businesses have traditionally managed their IT locally, with a server that sits somewhere in the office. All employee workstations are connected to this server which subsequently contains all the company's vital data: documents, files, user accounts and applications.

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CLOUD VS. SERVER

A server needs regular maintenance to protect it from virus threats and really needs to be replaced every few years. **If you're currently thinking of buying a new one, you need to consider the future of your business and ask yourself a whole heap of questions:**

- Am I hoping to grow my business?
- Will I be taking on more employees?
- Can this new server handle the workload down the line?
- And what happens if things don't grow as expected?
- Will I be left with an expensive new server and wasted spare capacity?

And what if you don't have all the answers?

Never fear, the cloud is here…

Your server issues could be thing of the past; because now you can store all your data and files without worrying about storage capacity and logistics.

Imagine this… your office no longer houses a cumbersome server that may or may not live up to your business needs. You simply rent server space in the datacentre of a Cloud Service Provider (CSP).

This CSP can spread the cost of its server space across multiple customers, so you can keep your own costs down. And you can now scale your server space up or down, whenever you want, depending on the ebb and flow of your business.

The cloud takes all your IT requirements, packages them up and delivers them to you as a hassle-free service.

ACCORDING TO THE EXPERTS: Technology experts, Gartner Inc. predict that by 2020, a corporate "no-cloud" policy will be as rare as a "no-internet" policy is today.

10 BENEFITS OF THE CLOUD

If you're thinking of embracing the cloud, the following benefits could help you make up your mind:

1. Easy storage and transfer of data.

2. Scale up and down depending on your business needs.

3. Prioritise your clients and your business, rather than IT issues.

4. No more expensive and complex servers that need patching and become out of date.

5. Automatic backups that occur regularly throughout the day.

6. Manageable, spreadable costs that work out cheaper than an in-house option of the same standard.

7. Free up valuable office space.

8. Enjoy added security - a Cloud Service Provider (CSP) will constantly update their infrastructure, patch their servers and monitor against cyber threats.

9. Freedom to work anywhere and access files on any device - all you need is an internet connection.

10. Smoother collaboration with centrally stored documents where multiple people can work on them in real time.

HOW SECURE IS THE CLOUD?

There are many myths surrounding the insecurity of cloud computing compared with traditional approaches. It's common for people to feel insecure with data storage technology that they can't see for themselves, own or control. But controlling your own server does not necessarily mean it's secure…

A **Cloud Service Provider** is predominantly an IT company and IT is its number one priority. Therefore, any service you purchase from a CSP will be secure and safe (arguably more so than your own in-house servers).

With a CSP, your applications and data are stored on a server in a remote datacentre. Nothing is stored on your personal device. So, if a device is lost or stolen, no data is lost. You can access your data on laptops, tablets and even smartphones.

It might be worth asking yourself:

When was the last time I upgraded my server?

Do I patch my server regularly? (Microsoft releases new security patches every month).

Do I constantly monitor my office network against threats?

Do I backup my files and data every night?

Unless you work at a big company with a huge budget, there's a good chance you'll answer **'no'** to at least one of those questions. In which case, your data is probably less secure than it would be in the cloud.

DID YOU KNOW? Identity theft has been the number one type of data breach since 2013, when the Breach Level Index first began tracking these incidents.

YOUR CLOUD SECURITY Q&A

Where is my data actually stored?
Cloud CSPs store your data in specialised datacentres (preferably in the same country as your business, but not always). Inside the datacentres are thousands of servers, each containing important information for a number of companies.

Are the datacentre servers backed up?
A good CSP will perform regular backups of all customer data. At entrustIT, we backup at regular intervals throughout the day so if you do have a problem (or you accidentally delete that really important document you've been working on) you're only ever about two hours behind. Most companies who run their IT infrastructure in-house will only perform a server backup once a day.

How else are the servers protected?
The servers are cooled using powerful air conditioning units and the datacentre itself has emergency backup generators and a number of internet lines. Should the power go out, or an internet line goes down, the datacentre moves seamlessly to its backup measures.

Are datacentres secure?
Datacentres are protected with military grade security, so nobody can enter without pre-registering 24 hours in advance and providing valid identification. They have CCTV with 24-hour recording as well as 24/7 on-site security, EMP protection, fire suppression systems, anti-virus and intrusion prevention - including multiple firewalls.

Can datacentre servers get overloaded?
In your CSP's office, they'll have a monitoring system which notifies the technical team of any issues on the servers. This includes a warning when servers are under heavy load – the technical team will then look to balance users out across servers to spread the load out and keep connection speeds snappy.

What about cyberattacks?
The monitoring service also looks to spot viruses and other attacks. If spotted, the technical team can act swiftly to identify and quarantine the virus, remove it, and then restore customers from a backup if necessary. While a determined intruder is difficult to keep out, the monitoring that cloud CSPs have in place ensures that these viruses are spotted and dealt with quickly. Most users of cloud services that encounter a security breach are back up and running on the same day.

LET'S GET YOU STARTED

You've got a business to run, so your CSP will oversee your IT migration to the cloud, leaving you free to carry out your day job. They'll build your user accounts, email addresses and application data while you continue working in your usual way. The final step is the migration of your documents and data into the brand new infrastructure. This can take a few days, depending on how much data you have, but it's all done in the background while you continue to run your business.

• When you 'go live' your CSP will be on hand to make sure things run as smoothly as possible.

• You can either choose to keep your current server and have a hybrid solution that's part cloud and part local - or you can ditch it all together and rely fully on the cloud.

• Most businesses choose a fully hosted cloud solution in the end because of the inevitable cost of replacing a server when it dies.

• **How much will a Cloud Service Provider cost?**

Prices can vary, depending on your CSP, but moving to a cloud hosted solution for your business is likely to reduce your costs in the long run. A CSP can spread the cost of expensive hardware over a number of customers, and so the overall price comes down for each client.

You pay a set monthly fee, based on the number of employees in your company, so there are no nasty surprises. You can also scale up and down each month depending on your needs - so you'll never be paying for something that you're not using.

DID YOU KNOW? 41% of businesses are planning to increase their investment in Cloud technologies, with 51% of big and midsize companies planning to increase spend compared to 35% of smaller firms.

TRUST THE EXPERTS

If you're ready to enjoy the benefits and peace of mind that the cloud can give your business; or if you'd simply like more information, get in touch with us today.

At *entrustIT*, we've been providing cloud solutions for businesses for over 10 years and have worked with businesses in many different industry sectors. As a company, we are ISO9001 and ISO27001 certified, which are the international industry standards for quality management and information security respectively.

Thousands of users access our servers daily across the world and we boast a 99.99% SLA from our UK datacentres.

Call us on 0330 002 0045 and we'll take a look at your current infrastructure and make a bespoke IT recommendation, based on your business needs.

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