

Cloud Computing for Business and Non-Profits

You may have heard about “Cloud Computing” which is gathering momentum and benefitting many organizations. If you have not heard of it, you will very soon because it is a force that is shaping business more every day.

This document presents a high level definition of cloud computing and 6 Reasons Cloud Computing may be a benefit to your organization....sooooo let’s get started:

To paraphrase the National Institute of Standards and Technology definition: **Cloud computing is a method for having convenient, on-demand network access to computing resources that can be quickly provisioned and used with a lower level of technology service provider interaction.**

Cloud computing is the only way an entrepreneur, executive, or investor in their right mind would test the business model of a new startup enterprise today.

You see, you can think of Cloud Computing like a gym membership: Instead of purchasing your own home gym equipment, which can be expensive, require maintenance, and take up a lot of space, you can pay a monthly fee to go to the gym and use a multimillion-dollar facility that is kept and maintained by someone else. The main difference between a gym membership and cloud computing is that cloud computing brings all the resources to your desktop for as long as you need

them, and then goes away. You do not need to go to a specific facility to use cloud computing.

You may be surprised to learn that people who use SalesForce.com, Gmail, Yahoo Mail, AOL mail, or EBay are already experiencing cloud computing!

Today, almost any computing resource or software that you have in your office can be provided by the cloud for a fraction of the cost of ownership while improving performance and making it available anywhere you have an Internet connection and a computer appliance like a Smart Phone, iPad, PDA, PC, laptop computer, tablet computer, and so forth.

With this understanding, let's look at 6 reasons that cloud computing may be a good value for your organization, and some of the downsides of it as well:

Saving money is the most common reason executives consider cloud computing. In many cases savings will result, although there are other times it remains a benefit to an organization without significant cost savings. We will look at that in future sessions.

If you want to save your organization a good amount of money on hardware, software, and support, you ought to be looking at the various cloud computing solutions that are available.

Cloud computing is one or more applications – for instance a CRM system like salesforce.com or email like Microsoft's Exchange – that is running on a server outside of your office and is securely accessed through the Internet. While some folks are still a bit skeptical of putting their entire computer network in the

“cloud,” that fear is starting to subside with the incredible cost savings and ever-increasing security and reliability of cloud computing.

Six Ways Cloud Computing Saves Money and Solves Many IT-Related Problems

1. **Cost Savings**. With a cloud computing solution, you get the instant advantage of having very sophisticated software running on top-of-the-line, fully supported hardware without having to pay for it out of pocket. Since the resources are shared, you only pay a fraction of the overall costs. Upgrades and on-going maintenance are included, saving you even more.

2. **You're Not Stuck with Any One Solution**. Another advantage of cloud computing is that there is no long-term commitment. If you don't like a particular CRM or application, you can (usually) cancel the contract and move on to something else. Compare that to building your own in-house solution which costs a LOT more money and is much harder to walk away from because of the up-front investment made when purchasing your own systems.

3. **Your Costs Go Up Or Down Based On Users**. Since most cloud computing fees are based on the number of users who have access, you can quickly scale up or down.

4. **Less Hassle**. Since your provider is providing these services like a utility, THEY are responsible for all the upgrades, maintenance, security, etc.

5. **Faster Implementation.** Building your own infrastructure is not only expensive, but also time consuming. With cloud applications, you simply ask your service provider to turn the service “on,” making it much easier (and faster) to get started.

6. **Easy Access from Anywhere.** If you or your employees travel a lot or work from remote or home offices, cloud computing makes even more sense because users can work from anyplace they happen to be connected to the Internet.

What About the Downsides of Cloud Computing?

Some folks are still a bit too squeamish to put their entire network and data into cloud computing, usually because of concerns over security or the fear of not being able to access their data if the Internet goes down. While these are concerns we frequently hear, they can be addressed by choosing a reputable computer consulting company with a long-standing history of good service; and by getting a backup Internet connection which is something we always recommend to our clients.

If you really want to know if your business can benefit from cloud computing, give us a call. Even if you’re not ready to go 100% to the cloud, you can often get certain pieces of your network on cloud computing to save money and provide easier access to those employees who are remote from your office or who travel.

Start to explore whether cloud computing can benefit your organization today. Contact BeckITSystems by email

ask@beckitsystems.com or on the web at www.BeckITSystems.com or call 703.433.0730 for a no cost and no obligation evaluation of your organization's computers and the value cloud computing may bring. While you don't need to make any changes, it is a great idea to know what cloud computing might do for you.

Feel free to contact me personally, Ed Becker, President of BeckITSystems, where we are ***Dedicated to Your Success.*** As your Cloud Computing Meteorologist, I am reporting that the forecast for Business Computing is Cloudy – which can be a GREAT thing for many organizations!

You have heard it said that ***the business with the best technology rules*** and that is true. You can't afford to wait.

Contact us today to learn more – Your competition will.

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