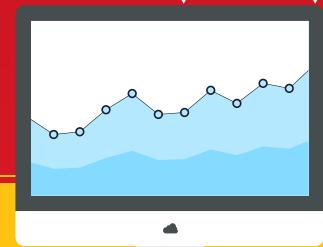




How to **Exploit Cloud Computing** to **Enhance Your Business,**

by Increasing Efficiency and Keeping
Customers (and Staff) **Happier for Longer**



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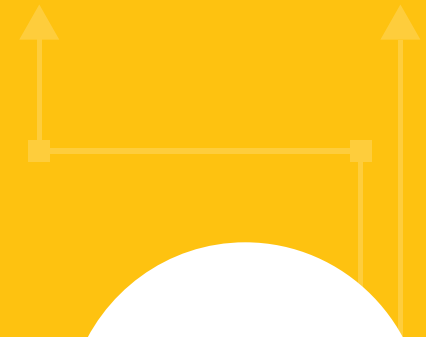
Everything you need to know about **Cloud Computing...**

If you aren't currently taking advantage of cloud computing, you could be missing a trick!

'The cloud' has quite literally changed the way businesses function and has been proved time and time again to improve vastly, not only the efficiency speed and profitability, but the success of a business overall!

With increasing popularity among SMEs in the UK, it really is worth taking some time to decide whether cloud computing is right for YOU.

Let's get back to basics...



What on earth is **Cloud Computing?**

Put simply, any internet-based computing.

The cloud is no physical thing; it's actually a network of servers, each delivering a different service (like Adobe) or storage space (like Dropbox).

Back in the day (before the cloud) computing would take place through applications, programs and software actually downloaded onto a physical entity – the computer under your desk. Now, cloud computing has cut out the middle man (your hard drive) and allows you to access all types of applications through the internet without having to feed and care for a demanding metal beast of your very own.

The three most **common types of cloud computing...**

1. Infrastructure as a service (IaaS).

You pay-as-you-go for online storage, hardware, software and resources, hosted by a third-party cloud computing provider.

2. Software as a service (SaaS).

You pay a subscription for an online 'hosted' application that runs on someone else's system, for example, "google docs".

3. Platform as a service (PaaS).

The cloud can provide you with a platform on which to develop your own apps and services (rather than having to create your own infrastructure).

There's also a fourth – for the bigger user – which is to keep using your own server, with the associated freedom from privacy and mis-use problems, but house the beast in its own cage (a data-centre like ours) a remote and secure protected location with 24/7 security, uninterruptible power, clean and cooled air and instant fire-suppression. This offers many of the benefits of cloud computing, though not all of them.

You'll undoubtedly notice some of the immediate benefits of cloud computing, but of course, the grass is always greener on the other side and there are arguments both for and against.

Unquestionably, the cloud does open up so much more opportunity, in particular for SMEs, but is it worth the associated risks and can you manage them?

Read on and decide for yourself...



The Benefits

to Using Cloud Computing in your Business

1. It's more cost-effective...

- **Physical Hardware.**

You won't have to shell out on storage, hardware and other physical resources (more expensive than online apps).

- **Scalability.**

You store as little or as much data as you like with no limitations and immediate scalability, but only get charged on a pay as-you-go basis (you no longer buy hardware that you won't necessarily need).

- **Direct Debits.**

Monthly payments allow you to keep an eye on expenditure throughout the year.

- **Multiple Devices.**

As the cloud can be accessed via a wide variety of devices (including personal) without using up memory, you'll save money on equipment costs. You can also put in place a BYOD (bring your own device) policy, allowing employees to use their own personal devices (mobiles, laptops etc.) at the office for work-related tasks.

The Benefits

to Using Cloud Computing in your Business

2. It's more manageable...

- **Maintenance.**

Your cloud computing providers are the experts and will take care of any server maintenance issues, including disaster planning from their own base (and more often than not, issues take half the time to resolve.)

- **Software upgrades.**

You'll never have to worry about upgrading your software! The Cloud support will do that for you (based on feedback they receive from their customers).

- **Organisation.**

Due to the nature of the cloud, everything can be kept in one unique central point and popped together in a good easily accessible order (rather than across an array of networks and servers).

3. It's more efficient...

- **Collaboration.**

With all of your files, documents and resources organised in a shared place, your team will be able to work on the same things and access other people's work in real time.

- **Access Anywhere.**

Your staff will be able to access everything they need for work, wherever they are as long as internet is available. This will enable people to work remotely, (from home, whilst commuting, in different locations - even across the world.)

- **Access via different devices.**

You and your team will be able to access everything from a range of devices (terminals, mobile phones and netbooks etc.) increasing out-of-office productivity.

4. It's more flexible...

- **Applications.**

You'll be able to switch applications easily and rapidly, using whichever one fits your needs best; you only use and pay for what you actually need.

- **Unlimited Storage.**

You (pretty much) have unlimited space to store your files, documents and data (at a relevant cost).

5. It's more environmentally friendly...

- **Less equipment.**

A whole host of different businesses will share the same physical resources, cutting the amount of carbon emissions.

6. It's more resilient...

- **Physical Resilience.**

The Cloud will continue to function, even when there has been a physical disruption, for example, equipment failure or power outage.

- **Disaster Recovery.**

The Cloud uses a variety of IT resources, in different physical locations. If one becomes redundant, another will immediately take over, meaning little or no downtime for businesses.

The Benefits
to Using Cloud Computing in your Business

In general, the cloud allows SMEs to compete with the business giants of the world, by increasing speed, efficiency and reliability (something that the larger corporations still struggle with, even using cloud computing).

**So, why
doesn't
everyone
switch over to
the Cloud..?**



The Downside of **Cloud Computing**...

There is one huge reason why many business owners aren't yet on 'The Cloud...'

...Lack of Security.

Although people are more than happy to store non-sensitive information online, there is an inherent fear of the unknown that leaves business owners feeling wary and suspicious.

The truth is; there are certain risks associated with the Cloud, but they are often rather exaggerated by media sensationalism.



Will my data be **secure**?

By surrendering your private and confidential data to the Cloud, you are, to a certain extent, placing your faith in the hands of an unknown, outside party (the cloud provider).

That data becomes a part of the World Wide Web and ultimately, nothing on the internet is secure.

However, reliable service providers will put into place a range of security controls to safeguard any weaknesses in the system and reduce the risk of attack to a minute scale.

What should I look for from a secure Cloud Computing Provider?

Before choosing a Cloud computing provider,
you need to ask the following questions...



**Will my data be encrypted
in the cloud?**

Without data encryption,
certain upper-level
members of your Cloud
computing team will be
able to access your data.

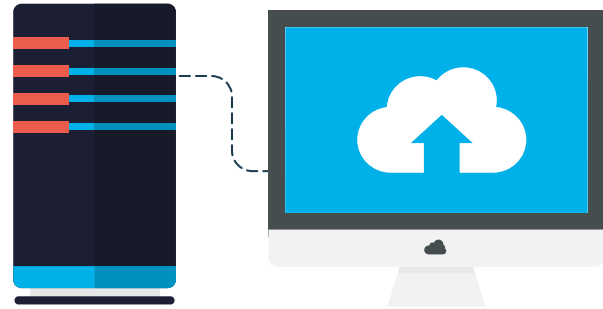
What's the back-up plan?

Before signing anything, you
should find out what would
happen in the worst case
scenario, for example, if the
Cloud (and therefore your
data) were hacked.

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Can you back-up your data?

You should always back up your data – you could do this through multiple cloud storage solutions; for example, Dropbox and Amazon’s Cloud Drive...



Any Cloud provider or IT specialist, who tells you that there are no risks involved in Cloud Computing, is fibbing – BUT – as long as you're aware of those risks and how to tackle them (a great service provider will provide everything you need) then the benefits outweigh the hazards.

If you think your operation might justify operating a server as your own private cloud – the fourth solution I mentioned above – you could always do that in a data-centre like ours.

Of course the key to the whole idea is a decent

connection to the Internet, which is something we fancy we know a thing or two about. To chat these ideas through, feel free to give us a ring, entirely without obligation.

Ready to get your
head in the clouds..?



From the moment you take up the Cloud in your business, you'll notice the above advantages, but of course, to reap the real rewards (efficiency, whilst keeping your staff and clients happier for longer) you **MUST** be able to guarantee one more thing...

...A 'fast' broadband connection.

We loosely use the term 'fast' due to an age-old and often-manipulated fallacy regarding wireless: speed is the key to a great connection (hence hyperbolic names like 'Superfast').

Unfortunately, this isn't the case; to function at a superior broadband efficiency it's really all about having...

- **ENOUGH (not more) capacity (or so-called 'speed')**
- **Maximum reliability**
- **Maximum signal quality**
- **Minimum user interference**

If you're considering moving your entire business operations onto the Cloud, it is absolutely essential that your internet is 100% reliable.

With a variety of users, devices, functions and heaps of data, information and files, you won't be able to perform properly with slow downloads, time-outs, pauses and never-ending buffering symbols.

At Deeside Communications, we know how important efficient broadband is for business, especially when you're regularly using Cloud Computing.

If you feel like it's time to fully utilise the cloud, but aren't convinced that your current connection could manage it, call Deeside on **01244 309 309** for a chat.

We'll assess your current service and advise you about how to improve it today.



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