



SIMPLY CLOUD WHITEPAPER

Introduction to Cloud Computing

What is 'cloud computing'?

The uptake of 'Cloud Computing' has been huge throughout the last few years, and is only going to increase throughout 2011. Many people are confused as to exactly what 'Cloud Computing' is, especially as it is such a broad term that is used to describe anything hosted or reached via the internet. A 'Cloud Platform' comprises of a highly scalable set of computing resources that are designed to give 99.99% availability of services. Customers simply reach these services 'on-demand' via the internet on a pay as you go basis. The term cloud is derived from the symbol used to represent the internet in network diagrams.

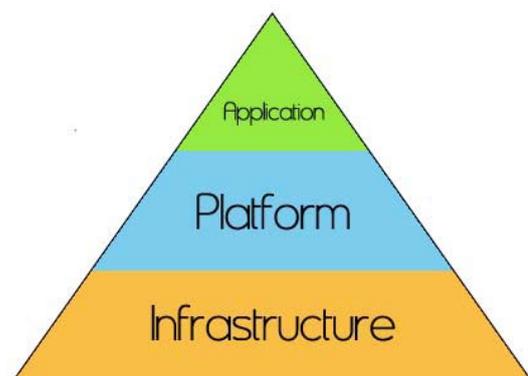
There are a number of reasons for migrating to a 'cloud platform', the main appeal being the potential cost savings. On a 'cloud platform' you only pay for what you need, as and when you need it. This keeps costs to a minimum and growth can be achieved at the touch of a button. Resources from the cloud are available around the clock and can be accessed from any location with an internet connection. All maintenance and upgrades are taken care of behind the scenes leaving you with access to the latest technologies 'on-demand' without the hassle or worry of an in-house solution.

The Cloud Computing Pyramid

To illustrate Cloud Computing we can use a simplistic pyramid graphic, it shows that the Cloud is made up of three sections:

Cloud Application:

At the tip of the pyramid is where applications run and are used via a web browser, installable client or hosted desktop. Using an application from the cloud eliminates the need to install the application locally and use resources on the client machine, the cloud application also removes the need to maintain and update the application as this is all done by our engineering team.



Cloud Platform:

The cloud platform itself is in effect an automated management layer that provides the cloud services. As the cloud computing platform is designed to provision or remove services at the touch of a button to fulfil the clients increases or decreases in demand, this can be thought of as a portal that sends out and manages requests to all the different areas of the cloud computing infrastructure.

Cloud Infrastructure:

This part of the pyramid covers the hardware and the virtualisation layers that make up the cloud computing platform. All components that make up the cloud computing platform are fully redundant and 'self healing', the environment is fully scalable in terms of CPU, RAM and disk space. This allows the cloud computing platform to be a true cloud, parts of the infrastructure can be seamlessly

migrated around in order to come with changes in load or failures in individual pieces of hardware. This layer ensures that the cloud computing platform is available 99.99% of the time.

Cloud Services

Hosted Desktops

A Hosted Desktop from the cloud removes the need for 'traditional' desktop PC's in the office, it reduces the surrounding infrastructure required and ultimately reduces the cost of providing the services you require. A hosted desktop works no differently to a regular desktop PC, the look and feel is the same but the software and data you use is securely hosted in our data centres. You can access your hosted desktop securely from any location with an internet connection in the world via a PC or laptop, or to provide further cost savings a [thin client](#).

Hosted VoIP

VoIP is just another way of making a phone call put simply VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) is about making calls over the Internet rather than through traditional telephone lines. All you need is a connection to the internet, no more expensive phone systems, BT lines or installations. The result is a substantial reduction in cost with no loss of audio quality. You can use 'normal' VoIP phones or use soft phones on your desktop, wherever you have a broadband connection.

Software as a Service

Hosted software also known as Software as a Service (SaaS) provides an on demand model, you get the latest software hosted in the cloud for a low monthly fee. Applications from the cloud mean you can access applications without having to purchase licenses upfront so you just pay a low monthly fee for services on a pay as you grow basis. New applications or users can be added at the click of the button, this can be great if you only need an application for a short period to complete a particular task for example.

Hosted Email

Having a hosted Exchange environment is an extremely cost effective way of meeting business email requirements without having to invest heavily in your internal infrastructure. Instead of purchasing servers and software licensing hosted exchange from Simply Cloud allows you to have email services on demand as you require them. You get the resilience of a larger enterprise due to our redundant exchange platform, you can also be as involved or uninvolved with management as you wish. We provide a management console that enables you to add and change users as you need to but our support team are available to handle management tasks if you need them too.

Hosted exchange uses a pay as you grow model so you only have to pay a small monthly fee for the users you have now adding additional users when you need them. You still have access to all the powerful exchange features web mail access via Outlook Web Access and instantly synchronised email, calendar and contacts when using Outlook or Entourage for MAC users.

Virtual Server

A virtual server is a dedicated partition on a physical server platform, it shares many of the benefits of having a dedicated server but at a fraction of the cost.

A virtual server runs its own operating system that can be independently rebooted, you can install the software that you need to run your business. Each server comes with a control panel to enable simple management, for both Linux and Windows servers. You control the specification of the server so if your requirements grow you can add additional memory, disk space etc in minutes, if the load on the server reduces you can reduce the specification so that you only pay for what you use.

Reasons to move to Cloud

Quick and easy implementation

Starting out with Cloud Computing is simple, as we provide all the required hardware, software licenses and administration for a small monthly fee all you need is a device to connect to the Cloud. The connecting device can be a [thin client](#) an existing laptop or desktop and we also support many smart phones and tablets.

Lower upfront capital expenditure

Cloud Computing works on an easy to budget monthly fee, as mentioned above the implementation requires only a connecting device often our customers use existing machines leaving them with no hardware costs. Not having to purchase expensive hardware and software licenses leaves your business with more capital to spend on other key areas of your business.

Flexibility of the Cloud

As Cloud Computing is a pay monthly service you can increase or decrease your services at the touch of a button. This is particularly useful if you have a task that requires you to increase your headcount for a few months for example, just pay for these seats for the months in which they are required.

Reduced Administration

Our highly trained engineers maintain and upgrade the platform 24x7, we are also on hand to perform administration tasks as and when you need them. You can keep control of your services through our control panel enabling you to add or remove services at the touch of a button as well as increase the specification of your services as required, but we do all the patching and upgrading.

Not only does this allow for your staff to concentrate on other areas of your business but it reduces the administration costs associated with your IT services.

Secure Remote Access Anywhere

The demands for the ability to work remotely is increasing, Cloud Computing allows for users to access their services via a web browser from anywhere with an internet connection both reliably and securely.

Guaranteed Uptime SLA

Services that are part of a true Cloud come with 99.99% uptime availability, it is important to check with your provider that your services come with this SLA to ensure your services are available as and when you need them.

Backup and Disaster Recover

Large amounts of businesses do not have effective backup or disaster recovery plans in place, and effective solutions can be costly. A good Cloud Computing provider will have a solid backup and disaster recovery plan in place, for example spanning multiple datacentres with redundancy built into each location. This redundancy gives you piece of mind that your data and services are save from disaster so you can guarantee your services are available when you need them.

Conclusion

Cloud Computing provides your business with enterprise facilities and uptime no matter what your business size, with a much reduced cost. A Cloud solution allows your IT to grow or shrink with your business, the pay-as-you-grow nature of the Cloud means you only ever need to pay for what you use. This can certainly help in tough economic climates as a business can still have access to the tools and services that are required for a business to grow and function effectively without the maintenance and upgrade costs associated with running them.

The technology world moves fast and can often leave a business outdated very quickly, with Cloud services the background technology used is constantly upgraded and updated to keep up to date with the latest technologies therefore allowing your business to use the latest technologies to your advantage as they become available.

It is important to trial Cloud services before you commit to migrating your services to ensure that your provider meets the needs of your business as well as provides the level of technical service that your business requires.

About Simply Cloud

Simply Cloud provides on-demand Cloud services to a range of businesses on our "Best of Breed" cloud platform. We operate a flexible, highly scalable platform that is designed to 'self heal' in the event of a hardware failure with no disruption to service experienced by our customers. This integral investment is key for the Simply Cloud team to deliver a 99.99% uptime guarantee across our services. Simply Cloud enables organisations to migrate to the cloud with minimal effort, providing benefits to businesses large and small.

Our highly skilled consultants are here to listen to your needs and requirements, we know that everyone's needs are different and if one of our wide range of products doesn't fit your needs entirely we can tailor the solutions to your requirements. Working with Simply Cloud you know you and your services are in good hands.