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CLOUD MIGRATION

THE CLOUD TODAY

Where it came from, how it's grown, and how you can leverage the benefits

FOREWORD

We can safely describe the past decade as the age of the cloud. Whereas cloud computing humbly started out around fifteen years ago, the technology is steadily expanding and becoming the dominant standard in IT. We can see that the cloud is now diversifying.

Public clouds, private clouds, multiclouds, and hybrid cloud solutions: the range of cloud services on offer is wider than ever.

Today, the cloud goes beyond just storing data in a virtual environment. Software applications (SaaS), hardware, databases, and even your entire IT infrastructure (IaaS) are now being moved to the cloud with ease. In this e-book, we take a brief look back at the origins and evolution of the cloud, with a focus on the capabilities and benefits of modern cloud technology. We'll also show you what to look out for when choosing a cloud solution, so you can take your organization to a higher digital level. Happy reading!

THE CLOUD: HOW IT ALL STARTED

The term 'cloud' first appeared in an IT context back in 1996. A small group of Compaq techies were talking about the future of internet companies and used the cloud as a metaphor to describe what IT infrastructure and data transport would look like in the future.

But the cloud only started to see real widespread development and uptake when Google introduced the term to the general public for the first time in 2006. It wasn't long after that the first large cloud-based platforms saw the light of day. They're now an everyday reality, and cloud pioneers like Dropbox, Netflix and Salesforce are well-known services and big players in the tech world.

In 2007, shortly before the term 'the new way of working' entered the business world, other major IT players like Microsoft, Amazon, and IBM also began to invest heavily in and market cloud services.
Slowly but surely, the cloud matured and the technology took the dominant position in IT that it occupies today.

What has changed?
The cloud has since become much more mature and versatile. Whereas the concept of cloud was originally confined to specialist IT departments for a while, many non-tech-minded people now have a basic understanding of what the

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cloud is exactly. The cloud has grown from a popular discussion topic for IT professionals to a strategic game changer, which has the potential to take business processes, customer journeys, and collaborations to the next level.
Innovations and improvements have also removed initial concerns about cloud security.

Cloud computing now hosts software, applications, servers, storage, databases, network features, software, analytics, and intelligence (artificial and otherwise) over the internet. Hardware has also largely been virtualized.
The speed of innovation has drastically increased while delivering flexible resources and significant economies of scale. Need more capacity in peak periods? Not a problem with the cloud.

Want to scale capacity down as you reduce resources? Just as easy. Plus, you're not then stuck with physical hardware gathering dust. What's more, you typically only pay for the cloud services you actually use, saving you operating costs.

By linking clear goals and ambitions to your cloud usage, it's easier to figure out exactly what you want to put into the cloud. It makes sense to start with the things that will give you the greatest benefit if they are stored in the cloud rather than on premises.

WHAT TYPES OF CLOUD ARE OUT THERE?

Not only has the cloud fully developed in recent years, but the diversity of choice is also greater than ever. As of 2022, you can choose from the following solutions.

Public cloud

The public cloud uses a shared online infrastructure. Your applications and data are stored in an environment managed by the cloud provider. Your implementation partner then maintains and updates the infrastructure.

Examples of public clouds include Microsoft Azure, Amazon Web Services (AWS), and the Google Cloud Platform. The public cloud is cost-effective, massively scalable, low-maintenance, and easy to use. It is also dependable – tech giants such as Microsoft or Google have large server networks that provide tremendous computing power).

Private cloud

A private cloud refers to a cloud environment hosted by a cloud provider for a single specific organization. You don't share hard or software with other organizations, and the infrastructure is stored either on your own premises or your provider's.

The private cloud requires more maintenance than the public cloud; this means it is mainly used in special situations, such as by companies with specific data storage and security requirements.

Hybrid cloud and multicloud

Hybrid cloud and multicloud are used in situations when you:
- use multiple clouds side by side; or
- combine one or more cloud solutions with on-premises infrastructure.

A multicloud consists of multiple public clouds that you use side by side for different applications. One example is when you use Amazon Web Services for your databases and data processing, but Azure as a PaaS or an environment for hosting certain business applications. A hybrid cloud is a combination of one or more public and private clouds with an on-premises solution. In a Microsoft hybrid cloud, your data is always hosted in Europe (specifically in the Netherlands, with Ireland as a backup).

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR WHEN CHOOSING A CLOUD SOLUTION

There are several things you should pay attention to when choosing and setting up your cloud solution. Here is an overview of the key points to consider.

What do you want to store in the cloud and how do you want to work?

First of all, it's important to know what you want to keep in the cloud and how you want to work. Take a close look at your current situation: what data and applications do you use in your business? Then think of your ideal situation: what would be the biggest benefit if you were to work in the cloud from now on? Maybe collaborating online in Microsoft Teams? Or would it be wise to start backing up your data to the cloud?

Remember… not everything needs to be migrated to the cloud at once. You can migrate things gradually, over a longer period of time. Get your employees involved, too, and ask them what they would like the cloud to do for them. After all, they're the ones who have to work with it.

Availability and support

If you want to do business 24/7 and allow your customers to place orders online at any time day or night, you want your cloud service to available continuously. You'll probably also need around-the-clock support from your cloud partner or implementation partner.

But 100% availability and support day or night do come at a price. So, make firm agreements about 24/7 support with your provider. Even if you need don't need that level of availability, it's a good idea to lay down these agreements anyway in the implementation partner's terms and conditions of delivery.

Make a wishlist

Why not draw up a cloud wishlist early on? This will help you answer questions such as:

- What exactly do you want to do in and with the cloud? Collaborate more effectively, back up your data, manage customers, develop applications, and so on.
- What steps should you take when?
- What are your industry-specific requirements? These could be technical and legal requirements on data storage, for example.
- What level of security do you need and who owns the data that will be in the cloud?
- Which countries can you store your data in under the applicable data protection regulations (GDPR)?
- How quickly do you need faults to be resolved and how?
- What support and training do your employees need?

Know where and how your data is stored

When your data is hosted in the cloud, it can be unclear where your data is stored exactly. Different rules and regulations apply in different countries. It could be that a foreign party even has access to your data. Pay extra care to storing and transferring personal data involving a country outside the EU. Make sure that your data is adequately protected there, under security standards on par with the GDPR.

Get rid of your old IT solutions

People are creatures of habit. They often find it hard to say goodbye to what they are used to and adopt the new ways of working that cloud offers.
A good adoption plan and providing the right information will make this process much easier. The transition will go more smoothly if you embrace innovation and emphasize the improvements that it will bring.

WHY YOU NEED TO MIGRATE: THE BENEFITS OF THE CLOUD

To wrap up, let's take a look at the key benefits of the cloud. What can embracing cloud technology do for your organization and your employees?

- You take out the software as a subscription. This means paying to use it rather than own it.
- You don't need to make any investments in advance or incur high depreciation.
- Data and applications are available anywhere, anytime. IT systems in the cloud are fully support remote working.
- The implementation partner installs and manages the software.
- You can change the number of users quickly and easily. The same goes for the features, data storage capacity, and locations.
- You always have the latest version of the software, and availability is guaranteed.
- Fewer hidden costs. Only software licence fees (approx. 9% of the total cost) are visible for a local server fleet. With cloud computing, 68% of IT spend is immediately transparent as fixed subscription costs.

WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?

Do you want to take advantage of the many benefits of the latest cloud technology? Focus Enterprise Solutions will be happy to help you.
We'll look at your current IT environment and your needs, and we'll work together to find the best cloud solution for your organization.

Focus Enterprise Solutions is your strategic partner for everything to do with Microsoft Dynamics 365 Finance & Supply Chain Management, plus Extended Banking – our own solution for processing bank statements. From deployment to management, we help SMEs across different industries get the most out of their ERP. As your proactive partner, we can help your organization move forward – both now and in the years to come. And our personal approach is central to this.

Want to find out more about our services? Please get in touch by e-mail to info@focus-solutions.nl or use the contact form on our website.

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