



TECHNICAL SUPPORT & SYSTEMS LTD

The Beginners Guide to Cloud Computing

Cloud computing is the latest industry buzz word but exactly what is cloud computing and what do you need to know about it?

What is Cloud Computing?

The concept of cloud computing isn't particularly new. Any service you have received over the internet in the past is effectively a cloud service. For example, a Google Docs account is an example of cloud computing where an IT service is received over the internet. As internet bandwidth improves the possibility of putting IT services in the cloud becomes greater opening up new opportunities.

How does it work?

A cloud provider buys all the servers, software, storage, networking and expertise to implement a specific network solution within a datacentre. They then sell access to this network solution as a cloud service on a "pay as you go" basis. For example, Company A spends £100,000 implementing a cloud back-up solution within a datacentre. They then sell cloud back-up as a service to clients on a "pay as you use" basis.

What cloud services are available?

Practically all IT solutions can be put in a datacentre and purchased as a cloud service. A total cloud solution would involve putting your entire IT infrastructure in the datacentre so that users accessed all their applications and data via the internet. Alternatively, you can pick and choose which applications you have hosted in the cloud such as CRM, accounts, database, email, back-up.

What are the advantages?

The main advantage is flexibility and cost. A cloud service is pay as you go so you don't have to make capital investments into your own IT set-up. For example, rather than pay thousands of pounds

purchasing the hardware, software and expertise to set up your own Exchange 2010 Server you can pay £5 per user per month to purchase it as a cloud service. There is also flexibility to increase and decrease the number of users when required.

Are there drawbacks?

Yes. Cloud computing is another option but certainly not the be all and end all. Firstly, if you have a cloud service then you are totally at the mercy of your internet connection. If you lose internet connection you lose access to your service. Secondly, cost needs to be closely monitored. You are effectively renting someone else's IT infrastructure and it isn't always cheaper in the long run compared to buying your own in-house solution.

Summary

Cloud computing is a welcome addition to the IT landscape. It gives us another option with a "pay as you go" payment plan. Its quick to deploy, flexible and can lower IT costs in certain circumstances but make sure you do your homework on all the options available to you and do your sums.

For more information on cloud computing contact TSS on 01923 211899 or at info@uk-tss.com.

