



THE BENEFITS of CLOUD COMPUTING

Cloud computing means that computing applications and data are stored on the internet (in the cloud), instead of on office based servers or personal computers.

Lots of people are using cloud computing, perhaps without even realising. Facebook, webmail like Hotmail and Google's suite of applications, are all examples of cloud computing. These applications are not stored on computers, but in data centres, accessed over the internet.

Leading software

Small businesses can access the same software solutions as major companies, because of cloud computing. Applications such as customer relationship management (CRM), enterprise resource planning (ERP) and financial software, as well as everyday applications like e-mail and spreadsheets, are available as cloud based solutions from a wide variety of providers.

Pay per user means lower costs

Software in the cloud is scalable. Solutions are available on a pay per user basis, so software costs increase as the business grows, removing the need for upfront capital investment.

Upgrades and maintenance

Cloud based solutions get managed, upgraded and supported as part of the package. This can be more cost effective and less time consuming than managing office based servers.

Back-ups

All data is backed up regularly with cloud based solutions, so the business knows its data is always safe

Security

Cloud solutions are complete with anti-virus protection, secure access and remote back-up, reducing risks for business.



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Work from anywhere

With cloud solutions, data is accessible anywhere from any connected device, giving employees the freedom to work flexibly.

Reduce the carbon footprint

Flexible working can reduce business travel, not only lowering operating costs, but also improving the carbon footprint.

Cloud computing systems are less power hungry than local servers, so help to lower business carbon omissions.

Things to think about when moving to the cloud

Try before you buy! Solutions should be available on a trial basis. So, businesses can explore the benefits and make informed decisions about the solutions to purchase, prior to making a commitment.

Do a cost/benefit analysis to see if cloud solutions are right for the business's needs.

Assess if the business is working as effectively as it could, by reviewing current software applications' fit with current business processes. Can the cloud offer a more appropriate and cost effective solution?

Where does the business want to be in the future? Think about cloud computing as part of the overall business strategy and how solutions can be used to help achieve business aims.

Such changes could mean a whole new way of working, so it's important that staff are trained properly on the new systems.

Although business continuity will become more straightforward, in the event of a problem, it's still a good idea to have a back- up connection or alternative work location.



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