

The Key Considerations for Successful Business Cloud

Introduction

Cloud Computing represents one of the most significant shifts in information technology many of us are likely to see in our lifetimes. Reaching the point where computing functions as a utility which has an incredible potential to expand our human capability through the multitude of promising innovations that we currently cannot yet imagine.

As with all advances in how we humans do things, Cloud Computing could be considered as being tentatively poised to deliver many benefits; however, as with all change, verification of information security and assurance is necessary. Through this evaluation process any incumbent changes in terms of any business impact can be analysed and effectively risk assessed to ensure that the business leaders are effectively kept up to speed and ready to deal with any potential risks to their enterprise. Organisations that currently use or are considering the use of Cloud Computing for their business environment should calculate what cost savings the Cloud can offer along with any associated risks; from which the company can practically warrant the adoption of Cloud Computing prior to just following the hype and latest buzz words from the fast moving technology world. Once potential cost savings and risks are identified, a better understanding of how Cloud Computing can be securely, integrally and efficiently deployed and reflected through achievement of the preset goals and expected business returns.

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The Enterprise Cloud

Business processes and procedures need to account for security and the information security managers may need to adjust policies and procedures to meet the business's needs. Given the dynamic business environment and focus on globalization, there are very few enterprises that do not currently outsource some part of their business, with a high percentage of organisations venturing into the Cloud Computing world, cautiously and are therefore familiar with the related risks of Cloud Computing.

Some key areas of consideration for the Cloud Computing environment include:



- Decision paths for which areas of the business data and information can be effectively and securely used from a Cloud environment.
- Selection and engagement with a reputable and reliable service provider who maintains the capability, track record and expertise within the Cloud Computing world necessary to not only provide the required Cloud services but who may also have additional complimentary service offerings, such as world class data centre and global networking capabilities.
- The selected provider may also be responsible for managing certain data which is a critical part of the business functions of the user; hence and as such, binding, committed and agreed Service Level Agreement are fundamentally necessary not only for availability and continuous performance but also for contingency therewith the incumbent data protection and confidentiality which may impact business operations.
- Consistency of performance in terms of data access and retrieval is critical to ensure that minimal time is spent loading data from the Cloud. This is an important factor specifically due to the nature of Cloud Computing being dynamic, therefore data may not be located in close proximity to the user and hence any latency of data retrieval must be evaluated.
- Confidentiality and data integrity are the most obvious security issues commonly raised with Cloud Computing. The actuality is that there is no additional security risk for a Cloud environment over the more traditional local processing or data centre environments; there may be even higher levels of security in Cloud environments through the deployment of single sign on technologies, security risk assessments

and vulnerability scans which are not normally considered necessary in the more traditional work ICT environments.

- Data location in Cloud environments may also need consideration for compliance to regulations and laws in different geographic regions where and when necessary. It is critical to ensure that the proper handling of data and information in the Cloud environment is defined and the organisation and provider can fully support and deliver upon any regulatory requirements to store, process and manage data in and / or from a specified region / country.
- Data access control is critical for any third parties engaged to support or provide services for the Cloud Computing environment. It is also necessary to ensure the effective protection of company confidential information, Intellectual Property (IP) and / or trade secrets.
- Although the nature of the Cloud should be self sustainable, this may not necessarily be the case at all times, it is therefore highly recommended to ensure sufficient and well defined business continuity management including disaster recovery planning is defined and agreed. The Cloud provider must understand the role it plays.

Making the Cloud work

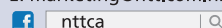
NTT Communications is both excited and cautious at the prospects and advances which Cloud Computing has the undoubted potential to bring, to not only itself as one of the largest telecommunications companies in the world, but also to the vast range of local, regional and global clientele which the company serves through 90+ Data Centres and across its Tier 1 Global IP Backbone Networks spanning the globe. NTT Communications recognises the significant opportunities the Cloud can deliver in terms of reduction in capital costs for its clients while also providing the ability for clients to divest the difficulties of infrastructure management along with, and most importantly, the agility offered by the on-demand provisioning of the Cloud and the ability to align information technology with business strategies and needs more readily; and therefore allowing our clients to grow, build, develop, focus and mature their core competencies.

There is a famous English proverb which states; "Every Cloud has a silver lining", the meaning of which is; that even though there may be some difficulties, all will be well and things will definitely work out for the better.

In terms of Cloud Computing, this proverb is proving to be uncannily accurate.

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