A quick guide to

CLOUD COMPUTING

VISUAL EDGE IT™

SECURE TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

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Introduction

We've all heard of the "cloud." And most of us use it routinely, whether we realize it or not.

Originally, the word "cloud" was a metaphor to describe how networks were connected on the internet. The term has morphed into "The Cloud" but in reality cloud services don't exist in one place.

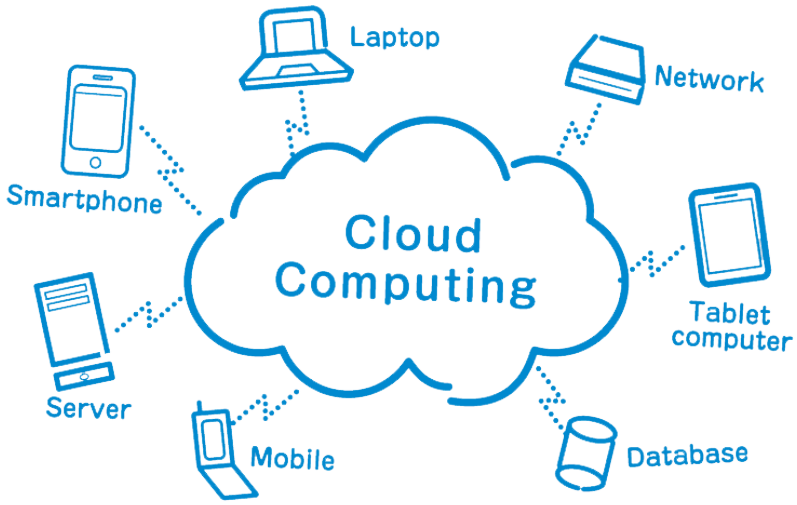
In operational terms, cloud computing is a model in which devices (phones, laptops, etc.) applications, servers, networks, data storage, development tools, and so on are enabled via the Internet.

In business terms, cloud computing is the foundation for everything an SMB or enterprise requires to do business. Internet access, measured service, on-demand functionality and rapid elasticity. The cloud is also the data backup, disaster recovery, security and business continuity of a technology infrastructure, all for a lower cost than traditional on-premise systems.

Instead of investing in all the hardware and software used for your individual business — not to mention training staff and figuring out how you will maintain it — many of these services are offered by a cloud service provider. You, as a business, only pay for the cloud services you use. This helps you save money and increase flexibility.

Many businesses use a combination of public and private cloud options to give them even more flexibility. In fact, according to CCS Insights, 41% of senior business leaders said public cloud is their top IT priority.

And for a small or midsize businesses, the phrase "cost savings" brings warm and fuzzy feelings. In fact, estimates show that the cost savings of going from an on-premise solution to a cloud-based service is anywhere from 35 to 50 percent.



This makes sense: hiring and maintaining an IT staff can be expensive. IT staff members all too often get pulled in many different directions and aren't able to achieve what a cloud service can do with its giant datacenters, on-staff engineers and redundant data storage capacity.

By using a cloud service, your IT person (and that may be you) can focus on more strategic tasks.

Cloud Deployment Models

There are three different models that your business can choose from when it comes to choosing a cloud service. The one(s) you choose will depend on the unique requirements of your business.

Public Cloud

When you use a public cloud, virtually everything you use is coming from a large datacenter, including software. And, as the name implies, the services you are using are also used by several other organizations. However, even when you use a public cloud, most often you can tailor the services somewhat to be your own.

Many businesses have adopted a public cloud service because it is much easier to be agile and causes fewer hassles for a small organization. Some companies use more than one public cloud service, depending on the service needed.

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41%

Private Cloud

A private cloud service is much like you would imagine... services offered by a server and datacenter are used just for one company. The private cloud service can be on-premise or located elsewhere and maintained by a third-party service.

Private cloud services allow a company to have more customization than a public cloud. Companies also often opt to use a private cloud service when security issues are very important.

Hybrid Cloud

Many businesses use a combination of an on-premise private cloud and a public cloud, called the hybrid cloud approach. To have a true hybrid cloud service, the two types must have seamless communication.

A hybrid cloud configuration allows greater flexibility when compliance or security issues are involved.

About Cloud Services

There are three types of cloud services that serve as the building blocks of the platform, including:

Software as a Service (SaaS)
SaaS is the most common cloud application used by consumers. Your business and your users can access a specific software application hosted on a remote server and managed by a third-party provider.

Users most often subscribe to SaaS services that are hosted on a remote service and managed by a third-party provider. Access is through a web browser, which enhances the idea of cloud services being compatible with remote work. If you've ever used Microsoft 365, Salesforce, Quicken, or Zoom, you have used an SaaS.

Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS)
With IaaS, a business can migrate its hardware to the cloud. This allows the cloud services provider to manage the server.

Visual Edge IT is an IaaS provider, for example. Cloud professionals transition your business's applications and services to a cloud infrastructure for you, then manage it for anywhere, anytime access by your users.

Platform as a Service (PaaS)
PaaS is a category of cloud computing services that provides a platform allowing customers to develop, run, and manage their own applications. It's a good choice for businesses that want to create their own applications without making a significant investment.

Some examples of PaaS services include Google App Engine, web servers, and SQL servers. In addition, Microsoft provides its Azure Cloud PaaS through cloud solution providers like Visual Edge IT as part of the overall Microsoft Cloud offering.

Cloud Service Providers

In 2021, the largest public cloud service providers are Microsoft (Azure), Amazon (Amazon Web Services or AWS), and Google (Google Cloud). However, some traditional data center vendors such as IBM, Dell Technologies, Hewlett-Packard Enterprise, and VMware are also available in this market.

Businesses with fewer than 1,000 employees are a driving force in this country. A traditional cloud service favorite among the small to midsize businesses is AWS. However, Microsoft Azure is a growing contender due to its security and flexibility and is rapidly closing the gap with AWS. In fact, Visual Edge IT™ uses Microsoft Azure to deliver its cloud solutions.

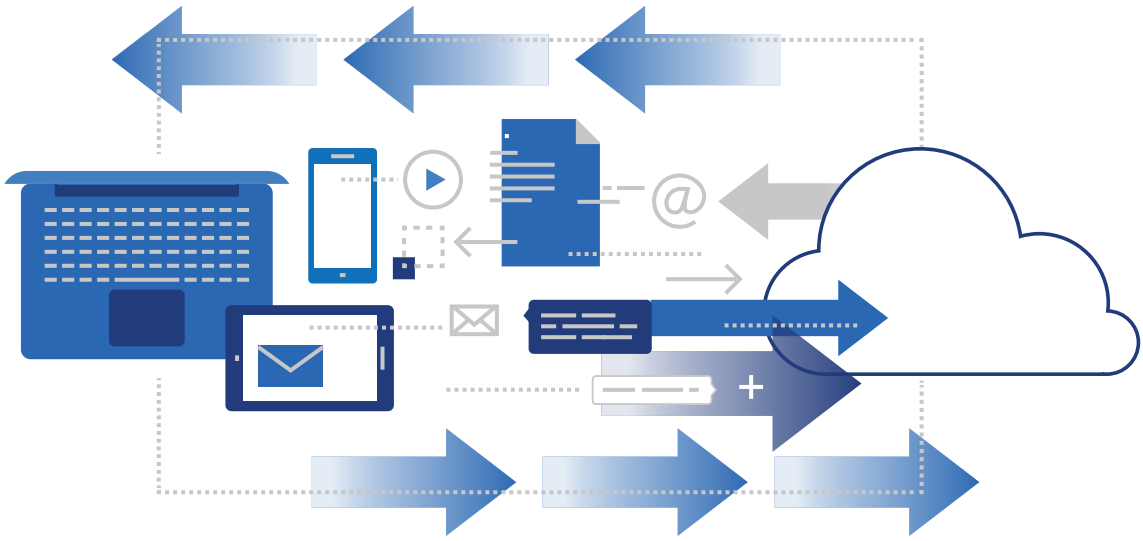
When you move your services “to the cloud,” it means that you are moving your services from your office IT infrastructure to a datacenter. Microsoft, Amazon, Google and other cloud service providers maintain data centers globally to support and offer services in localized regions worldwide.

Better yet, these datacenters generate massive computing power and are manned by certified engineers to provide the ultimate remote IT resources and teams. Most datacenter operations strictly follow certified procedures and regulatory processes to ensure compliance in various industries.

For example, Microsoft’s Azure cloud framework and global infrastructure are in more than 140 countries. The infrastructure is linked by one of the largest interconnected networks on the planet, including an undersea cable that Microsoft installed in 2017 to connect the US to Europe.

Like Microsoft, most cloud service providers continually upgrade their data centers to the latest generation of technical resources to keep computing speed and effectiveness at max levels.

Using a cloud-based datacenter, much of the need to set up hardware, patch software and other time-consuming chores are taken care of.



Benefits of Cloud Computing

Cloud-based vs. on-premise

The basic difference between cloud vs on-premise software is where it resides. Cloud services originate from data center locations around the world and users access them using the internet. On-premise software is installed locally, on your business' computers and servers. Cloud software is hosted on the vendor's server and accessed via a web browser.

Instead of your business making a significant investment in equipment, IT staff and ongoing maintenance, all of those needs are concentrated in a datacenter and on vendor servers. Those solutions are then managed by a cloud solution provider, like Visual Edge IT. Thus, you and your staff can focus on more important strategies that will move your company forward.

Speed and Responsiveness

The larger cloud computing services, such as Microsoft and AWS, are regularly upgraded to the latest generation of computing hardware. So, the speed and responsiveness that users can expect is most often quite high.

And that means your employees can work and respond to customers at a faster pace with far less downtime.

Flexibility and Productivity

With the rapid changes in today's business environments, it's more important than ever to have consistent performance at all times. The best cloud computing services will offer self-service and on demand, so that even large amounts of computing resources can be accessed within minutes. This helps your business stay flexible and productive no matter what the situation may be.

Scalability and Lower Cost

Cloud computing allows you to scale your computing resources far more easily. You will be able to access the right amount of IT resources right when you need it. And better yet, it is delivered from the right geographic location at the right time.

In addition, expect your costs for computing to be reduced substantially when you move your operation to the cloud. Using a cloud computing solution provider eliminates the capital expense of hardware, software, maintaining and powering a data center — and paying IT staff to manage it all. In addition, you won't have the constant use of electricity to power and cool servers when you leave all of that to your cloud computing services.

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Migrating to the Cloud

Moving your computing operations to the cloud requires taking some basic up-front steps first.

Assess your data: Run a data discovery to understand how your data flow functions, as well as where the domain and mail records are hosted.

Document current systems and software being used: With systems' and software documentation in place, your organization can simplify coordinating all the parts of your infrastructure that need to be migrated when making your move to the cloud.

System documentation describes your technology systems and all parts.
Software documentation catalogues your company's technology applications.

Develop a migration plan Work with an experienced IT services partner to create a well-thought-out migration plan for setting a timeline of tactics for your team. The plan will also help anticipate any obstacles and define the project's success.

Start with these checklists:
Cloud Migration | Strategic Business Considerations
Cloud Migration | Operational Business Considerations
Cloud Migration | Business Security Considerations
Cloud Migration | Network Architecture Considerations

Partner with an experienced cloud solution provider Working with a partner to help you plan, migrate to and manage your cloud services will efficiently and effectively get you through the migration process and beyond.

Look for extensive expertise managing business technology environments:
- Managing products and licensing
- Working with cloud services and applications
- Mobile device management and security features

And find a partner that can provide valued-added benefits such as:
- Regular meetings to develop a better understanding of your business and needs
- Industry-specific solutions bundled with cloud products
- Managed IT services to monitor and protect your entire technology infrastructure
- 24/7 end-user support with full-service Network and Security Operations Centers (NOC/SOC)

Let's Get Started

Cloud computing is a shift from the traditional way businesses organize their IT. And even when a business does decide to make the shift, there are several options to consider before landing on the right combination for each organization business.

Keep in mind the cloud's track record of reducing IT costs, offering increased flexibility and adaptability, and improving your user collaboration and productivity.

No matter how you decide to move into the cloud, doing so is definitely a wise move.

Visual Edge IT is an experienced cloud solution provider with a team of skilled experts who ensure your cloud migration is goes smoothly, you data is safe and sound, and your new infrastructure meets all of your business and user needs. Let us help you make the move.

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