



2016
The Year of the Cloud



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2016 – The Year of the Cloud

With many technological commentators predicting 2016 as the year of the Cloud and with industry rumblings that imply Amazon will soon be setting up on UK soil, we explore what the Cloud means to us today, the growing need for simplicity and we'll also dispel a few nasty myths along the way.

There is now a generation of soon to be CEOs, who have been using cloud-based services in one form or another to manage both their social and working lives. They see consuming services as the norm and they're not afraid of embracing it to help drive business growth.

Smart organisations are utilising IaaS (Infrastructure-as-a-Service) as an example to control infrastructure spend and leveraging value from the inbuilt agility that the Cloud offers, to react to unexpected shifts in demands on IT. Paying for what you need, when you need it, simplifies planning and lowers project costs.

Cloud capability is rapidly moving toward being the core framework around which any modern enterprise IT function is built. It is a framework that can facilitate the virtualisation of IT departments in much the same way that Cloud service providers use virtualisation technologies to deliver a cost effective and wholly extensible compute-stack.

Gathering Momentum

The [Gartner](#) Symposium in 2014 indicated that the Cloud market is set to be worth anywhere between \$65-80 billion by 2019. During 2015, there was a 32% growth in IaaS alone. PaaS (Platform-as-a-service) is a close second being seen as the 'smart' way to do development because it reduces project timelines and lowers overall costs.

It is little wonder then, that SAP, Oracle, Microsoft, HP and IBM are setting their stalls out as the go-to Cloud service providers. We are entering into the plug-and-play world where everything can be consumed as a service.

The Cloud Doesn't Care About Size

So just how easy is it to procure Cloud services, particularly from an infrastructure perspective?

The answer is that it depends on what you have and what you need. Any transition from a stable and mature data centre you own, to a third-party service provider, takes time and planning. Life-cycle costs have to be played out as part of any asset depreciation before jumping ship.

But, for smaller and medium-sized businesses that are either starting out or have small IT footprints, then nothing could be simpler. The giant of all things Cloud, Amazon, has made it as easy as easy can be. It really is click and go. We could all learn from the simplicity of their customer experience.



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Take a spin around the various offerings of Cloud service providers and typically you will be picking from one of four models:

- ▶ **Public Cloud** – shared infrastructure that is predominantly pay-as-you-go with resource limits. This tends to suit small businesses with limited budgets or used as a way to provide temporary resources.
- ▶ **Private Cloud** – specific customer dedicated infrastructure that delivers many of the benefits of the Cloud but allows customers to retain complete control of their assets.
- ▶ **Hybrid Cloud** – combines both public and private models. The Use Cases tend to be ones that require expanded resources during peak periods, support business contingency and DR or the need for temporary resources to support testing and development.
- ▶ **Community Cloud** – used by organisations bonded by a common purpose or subject to common governance and legislation. It is a way of sharing costs and ensuring mutually beneficial collaboration.

Also moving forward, a growing number of providers are looking to deliver open access through standardised APIs or the so-called 'Open Cloud'.

It is getting simpler to use Cloud services and integrate any Cloud-based IT solutions and systems that much is certain.

No More Scary Stories

But so what, even if it is that easy to procure, aren't there some big scary security issues to be considered? The Cloud has to be less secure right?

Of course, there are security questions to be looked at, but no more than any CEO should be demanding his CSO consider as part of his or her day job.

High profile hacking events such as Talk-Talk, E-Bay, and Ashley Madison weren't predicated on whether those systems were on premise or deployed to the Cloud but rather whether adequate security protocols and robust governance processes were in place.

The truth is that the majority of Cloud providers, big or small, have exceptional levels of security. They understand the importance of data and that security matters, not only to protect their customers but equally to their own reputations.



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Data Ownership

The other scary thought lurking in the average CEO's box of worries about the Cloud, is whether any data held on a third party's infrastructure can be compromised: the third party entering liquidation or, as with the US' [Safe-Harbour](#) legislation, data being fair game for the government of the country where the Cloud infrastructure resides.

The [European Court of Justice](#) ruled in October of this year that the Safe-Harbour legislation would not apply to the EU. As a result, many US providers are making major pushes to establish data centres located within Europe and particularly in the UK.

It goes without saying that reliable providers have contracts that ensure any data held within their data centres remains the property of their clients come what may. Any provider that doesn't state that in a contract deserves a nice polite wide berth.

New Year, New Opportunities

So will 2016 be the year of the Cloud? It's looking likely. The Cloud Hype Cycle is well and truly entrenched in what Gartner term the productivity phase.

With the mighty Amazon planning to have Cloud fabric in the UK by 2017, it's clear that the market is experiencing an upswing that is showing no signs of slowing up and they certainly have their place in the competitive landscape.

The growing demand to utilise Cloud solutions in 2016 also presents the ideal opportunity for smaller Cloud service providers to service organisations that need a higher level of agility and professional support. And those who are not always best served by a Cloud giant, especially when it comes to resolving issues or discussing 'best-fit' options.

At Q, we know that the best way to get a Cloud Solution working in a meaningful way is by taking the time to understand a client's needs and aspirations. If 2016 is the year that you'd like to get Cloud Solutions delivering for your business, then we'd love to hear from you.

To learn more about what Cloud Solution is best for you, please contact us using the details below.

Contact our Cloud specialist team on:

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