

Topic:

All about “the cloud.” (Part 1 of 3)

Definitions:

Cloud – The cloud is simply a metaphor for a large group of powerful computing systems that offer services, such as data storage or other computing applications, like gaming, from outside an organization’s own system. Those advanced networked services are shared with or delivered to the organization’s computers and devices from that outside system.

What to Know About Cloud Computing:

Cloud technology has helped businesses become more efficient in many ways. In addition to improving overall “time to market,” the cloud has helped reduce operational and capital expenses for computing services, and provides organizations with the ability to keep up with rapidly changing computing demands on a global scale.

The term “cloud” is nebulous because it remains difficult to understand how to optimize this service with your business needs. There is no one-size-fits-all cloud strategy for types of businesses, or even handling workloads within an organization. Therefore, understanding your workload’s attributes (performance, security, integration, and data volume) is critical in making a cloud-hosting decision. You will need to assess which workloads are most suitable for cloud services, and continuously monitor performance to ensure your business needs are being optimized.

What to consider when contemplating cloud-based services:

- Overview – Build a common understanding of what the cloud means, as the term has become a catch-all for storage and software services.
- Business considerations – Be sure the cloud service addresses problems your organization is trying to solve.
- Technical considerations – Assess your need for performance, security, integration, data volume and workload elasticity to make sure the cloud is the right solution for your business.
- Ecosystem considerations – Software as a Service (SaaS), a cloud service provider (CSP) offerings, or accessibility to cloud expertise will determine if the cloud is the right environment for your business.
- Other considerations – Consider a range of issues, like existing applications and their cloud readiness, licensing, and organizational practices, such as disaster recovery.

In general, cloud services provide on-demand access to a shared pool of computing resources designed for rapid provisioning and release with minimal management or provider interaction. As you examine your cloud requirements, your first step is to identify which cloud services best fit your needs, and assess which model is best for you.

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