



Cloud computing is a technology that uses the internet and central remote servers (at a third party's location) to maintain data and applications. Cloud computing allows consumers and businesses to use applications without installation and access their personal files at any computer with internet access. This technology allows for much more efficient computing by centralizing storage and

Cloud Computing for your Business

Karol Tegha

One of the most common buzzwords in IT today is "cloud-computing." What is it exactly? This question has been one of the biggest mysteries to small business owners looking to implement this service in their network infrastructure. Along with actually knowing how "the cloud" is good for business, companies want to know how reliable it is and more importantly how it could save them time and money.

memory among other things.

Broadly speaking, any service or program sent over an Internet connection can be considered a cloud service. An outside vendor runs the servers and software, so the buyer doesn't have to worry about the technical issues in-house, and can focus on their own business.

Cloud computing comes in many forms. Most businesses today use some type of internet-based service to run their business. An example is Google's Gmail, an email service or backup data storage services. Cloud computing is technology that can be seen as computing power on demand.

Unlike traditional applications, which require hardware such as servers, cloud services don't carry many upfront costs. The average cost of a server can range from \$2000 to \$6000 depending on specifications. And the average server is recommended to be replaced after 5 years. Cloud computing can save a company a lot of money in the IT department. In Sept 2009, an Aberdeen Group study found that disciplined

companies achieved on average an 18% reduction in their IT budget from cloud computing and a 16% reduction in data center power costs.

As far as security is concerned, most companies feel safe having their valuable data stored in-house. Many companies do not like the idea of having important and sensitive client/customer information outside their firewalls. This was one of the few issues that made cloud computing a less attractive solution to companies. To try and solve this issue, the Cloud Security Alliance, a non-profit organization, was formed to promote the use of best practices for providing security assurance within Cloud Computing.

Part of M&H Consulting's services is providing small businesses with the option of an in-house computing infrastructure or "the cloud". Our partnership with Blue Robin, a leading eBusiness infrastructure developer, has proven valuable to our clients when deciding what type of network infrastructure to implement.

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Data Security

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Keeping clients satisfied and increasing sales makes running a small business hard enough, without even including keeping track of expenses, management, and all employees. Small business owners also have to worry about the security of sensitive information circulating their network infrastructures. These days, in 20 seconds or less, an employee can slide a thumb drive into any computer and transfer over company documents with little to no accountability. A great example is an employee at a law firm copied a client's case files onto a USB flash drive to work on them at home. Should that flash drive be lost, all of the client's private information could be made public, and the company would be held liable.

Also, have you ever had employees use USB flash drives to transfer files from their home computer to their office? Well this innocent file transfer can

bring with it an infection to a company PC, or worse yet, your entire network. Or the more common scenario, an employee installed a favorite application on the office machine without administrative approval. Renegade software installations can create system instabilities or introduce security vulnerabilities to the network. Plus, any application installed on a company PC needs to be legally licensed to the company but often times, it's not.



Just as easy is the ability for employees to burn information on a CD. This may take

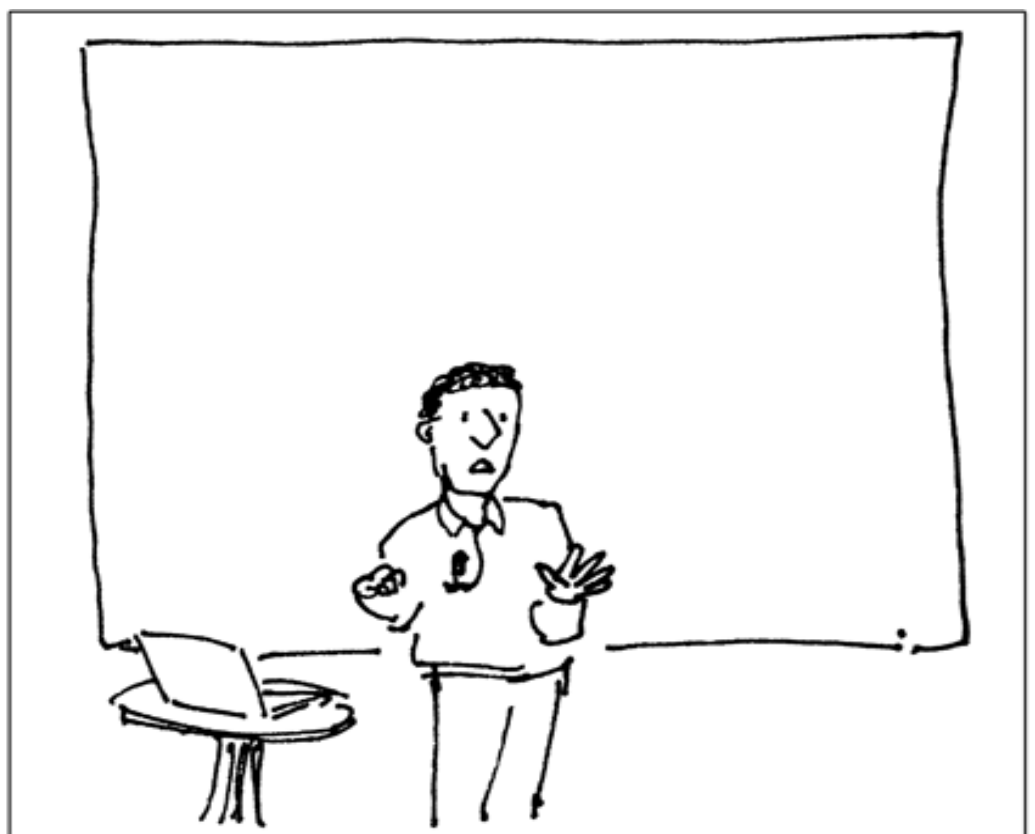
as much time as copying it over to a USB drive, leaving sensitive company information out to the public.

One way to resolve the issue is to configure the office PC to not allow the use of the USB flash drive or the ability to burn a CD. This can be done a few different ways depending on the size and network of a company. There is also software which can prevent users from transferring data off of company computers, as well as monitor the PCs for any non-work related activities which can help to make the company more productive and secure.

If you have any questions or would like to look at taking steps to secure your companies data please give us a call at M&H Consulting and we will be happy to assist you. M&H Consulting can be reached at 866-964-8324 x75 or at support@mhconsults.com.

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Now, on this slide, may I direct your attention to the flashy animation and cool transition effects... because I worked really, really hard on them.