

Evaluating Public Cloud Services

Are they right for *your* business?

The **public cloud** has forever changed the way companies approach IT strategy. Because it can drastically reduce capital expenditures, enhance sharing and collaboration, and provide the ideal launch pad for new applications, **nearly 9 in 10** enterprises now use public cloud services. Moving to the cloud, however, is not as simple as signing up and setting up. There are several important questions and variables to consider first.

? Do you fully understand your public cloud options?

For most users, moving resources to the public cloud includes not only migrating servers, but also ongoing performance monitoring, security patching, resource provisioning and other maintenance tasks that are required to maximize the utility of the infrastructure. To address those needs, top providers offer dozens of core and complementary products – from analytics and application services to database management and development testing. Furthermore, organizations are increasingly adopting a hybrid strategy. This means certain assets, applications and workloads stay on premise or live in a private cloud by nature of use case or compliance, while others are managed in a public cloud.

? Can you manage your public cloud resources once they're running?

Major public cloud service providers, such as Microsoft Azure, offer powerful, reliable products – secure environments, good service levels, instantly scalable resources – but in most cases they still require the user to play an active role in monitoring and maintenance. In fact, the baseline service for most major public cloud providers don't extend to the operating systems installed on the cloud instance, leaving the subsequent management tasks up to the user. This is no sweat for some businesses, but if your IT team is already backed up against the wall (or if your IT team is just you) life in the public cloud may involve more work than you initially envisioned.

? Is the public cloud even the right infrastructure for your technology needs?

The popularity and prominence of public cloud is undeniable, but it shouldn't be mistaken for a universal solution. While it's great for applications with unpredictable traffic and startups that need an economized, pay-per-use model, oftentimes public cloud customers are overpaying for and underutilizing their infrastructure. Certain workloads – such as applications or websites with steady, predictable traffic – are better suited in dedicated environments like virtual private clouds or on bare metal servers.

Public Cloud Evaluation Checklist

Before you move ahead, consider the following steps required for a successful public cloud strategy, and most importantly, make sure you have the time and resources to manage your infrastructure once it's up and running.

Research and Evaluation

- Evaluate current IT infrastructure utilization
- Explore alternative IaaS options — e.g. dedicated or virtual servers, private cloud
- Research vendors
- Ensure service complies with internal IT policies/ industry regulations
- Understand public cloud billing — e.g. metered usage, cycles

Expected Public Cloud Usage

- Data storage/warehousing
- Data pipelining
- Big Data analysis
- Application development and testing
- Application hosting
- Media & content delivery
- Integration w/ on premise networks (hybrid)

Making the Transition


- Audit servers and VMs moving to cloud
- Determine migration support/management needs
- Develop and execute detailed deployment plan
- Setup user accounts/authorization
- Train admins and staff

Managing Your Public Cloud

- Automate provisioning of new resources
- Network setup and configuration
- Manage Operating System
- Manage event logging
- Disk/partition configuration and management
- Optimize resource usage
- Determine customer service/support needs
- Monitor resource performance
- Monitor resource capacity
- Evaluate additional system administration needs
- Track fluctuations in monthly spend
- Create process for moving workloads to and from dedicated environments

Securing Your Public Cloud Assets

- Evaluate resources needed for security monitoring, maintenance, troubleshooting
- Schedule and install OS security patches
- Ensure current backup and disaster recovery tools integrate with cloud
- Configure and customize firewalls

 Questions about public cloud, managed services or other IaaS options? Talk to a ServerIntellect expert now. Call us Toll Free at 855-850-HOST.