

# FAQs

## About the Cloud

### What is Cloud Computing?

Simply defined, cloud computing is a technology that allows users to access and use shared data and computing services via the Internet or a Virtual Private Network using a scalable range of resources without having to build infrastructure to support these resources within their own environments or networks. This is in contrast to conventional on-premise IT, where your company runs its applications exclusively on its own internal infrastructure -- including servers, storage, networks, firewalls, load balancers and other hardware. With cloud computing, users can access files and use applications from any device that can access the Internet.

### What types of services can be moved to the cloud?

- **Phone Systems**  
Cloud-based communications solutions free organizations from managing carriers, phone systems and vendors. Often referred to as 'Hosted PBX' or 'HPBX', these solutions provide lower total cost of ownership, scalability, advanced end-user features, and web-based control to any user, in any location, for a predictable monthly fee.
- **Servers**  
Virtual data centers deliver a safe, secure alternative for managing your vital information without the costly overhead of physical equipment and the resources to operate it.
- **Call Centers**  
Hosted Call Centers enable organizations to unify and simplify their call center operations with a turn-key hosted solution that removes geographical boundaries, all for a simple per user monthly service fee.
- **Desktops**  
Virtual Desktop infrastructure frees businesses from the endless cycle of purchasing, supporting, upgrading and replacing local PCs by providing an untethered "virtual" workspace that can be accessed from anywhere, at any time, on a variety of devices and for a predictable monthly fee.
- **Applications**  
Office applications provide customers with the enterprise class software they need from the cloud, eliminating on-site servers, licensing, maintenance and headaches.

# How safe is my data in the cloud?

While no distributed communication or computing system can be guaranteed to be 100% secure from malicious attacks, cloud providers offer a broader feature set that supplies all of the security your business needs. And unlike traditional methods, a cloud solution delivers added resiliency and redundancy to provide critical business continuity and disaster recovery.

## What should I look for in a cloud service provider?

- **Enterprise Class Capabilities**  
Look for a provider that offers a range of managed and professional services to help you develop a cloud strategy based on your needs, migrate to the cloud and maintain optimal cloud performance.
- **Experience**  
There are many companies jumping on the cloud bandwagon when it's not their core business. Be sure to choose a provider with a track record in providing secure hosting, delivering mission critical applications, and managing enterprise communication and computing systems.
- **Forward-Thinking Cloud Strategy**  
As cloud computing is continually evolving technology, you'll want a provider with a carefully built foundation as well as the commitment to invest resources to ensure they are leading -- not following -- the trends.
- **Technical Expertise and Support**  
It's important to ensure your provider offers the levels of customer support you are accustomed to, along with experienced engineers who are available 24/7/365.

## How will my business benefit from moving to the cloud?

- **Trade capital expense for variable expense**  
You buy access to cloud computing on demand, enabling you to move capital equipment costs off your balance sheet and turn them into a monthly expense. Instead of having to invest heavily in data centers and servers, you pay only when you consume computing resources and only pay for how much you consume.
- **Stop guessing capacity needs**  
Enjoy the flexibility of being able to quickly add services, make changes on demand and scale as your needs change. With cloud computing, you can access as many or as few resources as you need, and easily scale up or down to meet fluctuations in demand.
- **Access new technologies**  
In a cloud computing environment, new IT resources are just a click away, which means you reduce the time it takes to make those resources available to your team to just minutes. You also no longer need to worry about updating your software or investing in new back-end technology, as your service provider manages this on your behalf.
- **Increase productivity**  
Eliminate the time valuable IT staff spends on maintaining and repairing equipment and focus them on more strategic objectives. Your entire team benefits from having the ability to work more efficiently as they can utilize any device (smartphone, tablet, laptop) that has an Internet connection.
- **Privacy and security**  
Built-in security, redundancy and disaster recovery enables you to leverage the cloud without the risk.
- **Environmental factors**  
Cloud computing offers a more environmentally friendly way of fulfilling your IT requirements by helping reduce your energy consumption and equipment waste.