LOVE IT, LOATHE IT OR LEVERAGE IT …

WHAT’S YOUR CLOUD STRATEGY?
Abstract

With all the hype and confusion surrounding cloud and cloud strategies, this paper looks at three main choices IT organizations might make in regards to cloud technology.

We look at the benefits and pitfalls of each, and how a balanced approach might not resonate with vendors and industry consultants but could be your most logical choice.

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Overview

The cloud has impacted IT organizations more significantly than any other trend in the past decade – there is no denying that cloud strategies are impacting every IT decision and factor in every project either underway or being planned.

But what does the cloud really mean for email management in the current age? Must you have an “all or nothing” strategy? Are you ready, do you understand the pitfalls of each approach, or are you being overly swayed by vendors and the press? In this white paper, we’ll look at three cloud strategies for email messaging management.

LOVE IT: The “All In” Cloud Strategy

Email environments are an obvious choice for pure cloud deployment: after all, email is an over-the-air function, and many users today read the bulk of their email via mobile devices. It’s being transmitted over IP anyway; why not just put the whole function in the cloud?

There are numerous benefits:

- Avoids infrastructure upgrades, issues, and limitations
- Satisfies user mobility requirements
- Turns email from a capital expense to an operating expense
- Eliminates the need for an Exchange management function
- Is very cost-compelling and obviates the need for ancillary functions such as email backup and archiving

But wait, is that the entire picture? The answer, sadly, is no.

Today, hosted email is a relative bargain: large mailboxes, flexible contracts, no hard limits on storage. As an IT professional, you need to understand that this attractiveness is not based on actual costs; it’s designed to capture new customers.

The outcries of mobile phone customers who are now faced with paying for all the bandwidth they’re using to download movies and applications are a warning: unlimited cloud email won’t be unlimited forever. When it does change, how will you make sure you’re not simply paying to keep terabytes of ancient, useless email?
LOATHE IT: The “It’s Not For Us” Cloud Strategy

Companies have been using on-premise Exchange solutions for decades, and they already have investments in infrastructure, personnel, and management – what does cloud really bring that they don’t already have?

There are a variety of reasons to remain an “on-premise” Exchange shop and resist any temptation to move anything to cloud:

- You have already laid-out many of the expenditures needed to set-up and manage an Exchange environment
- You have regulatory and compliance concerns about putting sensitive and executive email in a hosted environment where you don’t have full ownership and control
- You’re already leveraging inexpensive storage, and tightly managing your message environment
- You already have an archiving or information management platform that keeps your information store requirements to their minimum

It sounds tempting – you know that any new technology area like cloud is bound to have plenty of surprises, challenges, and new problems that you’ll encounter at all the wrong times and that will wreak havoc with your carefully-planned IT projects. However, you’re also going to have executive management – many of whom have heard the hype and buzz about cloud but haven’t thought through all the implications – pushing you to adopt cloud technologies. They will be anticipating significant cost savings, better technology utilization at the company, and better experiences for email users. If you don’t agree with their assessments, can you convince folks that your strategy is the best one for the company?
LEVERAGE IT: The “A La Carte” Cloud Strategy

There are as many definitions to cloud, cloud environments, PaaS and IaaS as there are consultants and experts who talk about them. None of us should be surprised: cloud is relatively new, cloud is evolving, and cloud does have some very compelling benefits. Do you need to choose sides (love it or loathe it) or can you follow a strategy that is somewhat in the middle?

The term which is evolving for this strategy in Exchange environments is ‘hybrid’. In the hybrid IT model, on-premise and cloud resources are blended into a single solution. There are several significant benefits:

- Security and ownership concerns are addressed: Your most sensitive users’ email, items under compliance, etc., can all remain on-premise behind your firewall. IT processing can also remain local so that you retain overall control over your data.
- Cloud can be leveraged in areas where it truly shines, such as low-cost storage, flexibility and remote access.
- Your environment management remains much as it has been (with minimal disruption for IT or users).
- You can balance how much you keep on-premise and how much you send to the cloud to best meet the on-going needs of your business, both now and as it evolves over time.

Hybrid notions are relatively new – but gaining traction. Some analysts believe the IT organization of the future will be more like a clearing house, leveraging numerous different cloud implementations and balancing internal and external resource deployment. Your challenge may be from the two other camps. Cloud proponents will see this as a stop-gap, a non-solution, and stakeholders seeking the comfort and control of on-premise will see this as an erosion of that security. Can you get both sides to agree and embrace a solution that bridges both extremes?
Which Cloud Strategy Is Best For You?

... “It All Depends”

Sadly, there are no hard answers here, except that the discussion isn’t going away and cloud is here to stay, in one form or another. Your infrastructure may be in serious need of overhaul, you lack an archiving solution, and moving to the cloud might be your best option.

You may have security concerns that override any use of cloud for something as risky as email (email comprises 85-90% of most litigation, it’s hard to find something more risky). Or you may be in the position where a “best of both” strategy suits your needs perfectly.

As a vendor, we took a two-step position ourselves. We chose to enable the backup storage aspect of our product for the cloud, yet keep the core software components and primary data on-premise. We still see a significant “settling out” in the cloud world, as evidenced by the sheer number of times that Office 365 has changed direction and strategy since its introduction.

We also began to focus on products that would address what customers were potentially moving to the cloud – specifically PST files. We created products that minimize exactly what customers need to re-ingest if they go all-cloud, so they only migrate email that has business value. And when the cloud offerings mature and customers are expected to pay for volume, we’ll provide the same seamless information management in a totally cloud-based environment.

That is the lesson we hope you take away from this paper: anticipate your future needs and the future market and plan accordingly. Just like a migration needs to be planned, how and when you leverage the cloud needs to be planned. Focus on both your immediate and your long-term requirements, and it will be much easier to navigate the hype and buzz of cloud.
About C2C

C2C is a leading provider of email and information management software for Microsoft Exchange. Our products provide centralized control over archiving, retention, disposition, compliance, preservation and discovery of corporate data. From our initial compression product twenty years ago, to our flagship ArchiveOne Enterprise platform, C2C products are recognized for ease-of-use and flexibility. C2C continues to meet the evolving needs of organizations and our customers benefit from improved server performance, reduced storage costs, improved search and discovery processes, and lower corporate risk because they manage email and data before it overwhelms them.

ArchiveOne email archiving solutions are chosen by enterprises who want a seamless user experience and tight integration with all versions of Microsoft Exchange. Configuration options include on-premise and Hybrid-cloud, offering organizations the need for flexible infrastructure design.

Organizations looking to control PST files choose PST Enterprise to locate, migrate, and ultimately expire data held in PSTs. This allows them to consolidate resources, migrate to new architectures, and eliminate the risk inherent in old, unknown email data.

A Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, C2C was established in 1992, and is a privately-held company with offices in Westborough, MA and Reading, UK.