

Advisory Guide:

**“Answers To The Top 5
Questions Business
Owners Have About
Cloud Computing”**

**Discover What Most IT Consultants Don't
Know Or Won't Tell You About Moving Your
Company's Network To The Cloud**

By Bill Jest,

Wem Technology

www.wemit.co.uk

Phone: 020 8740 6000

A Letter from the Author: Why Did We Create This Guide and Who Should Read It



From The Desk of: Bill Jest
Business Development Wem Technology

Dear Colleague,

Undoubtedly you've heard all the commotion around cloud computing and how it's the "next big thing." **Yet, despite all the hype, no one really seems to understand what cloud computing is or how it can help your business.**

That's why we wanted to set the record straight and provide business owners and executives with a simple, easy to read guide that explains what cloud computing is, how it can (possibly) help their business and, if it can help, what they need to know in order to make good decisions about choosing a cloud vendor.

Why "possibly?" Because cloud computing is NOT a good fit for every company; and if you don't get all the facts or fully understand the pros and cons, you can end up making some VERY poor and expensive decisions that you'll deeply regret later.

That said, for some clients, cloud can actually lower their IT costs, greatly improve the ability for remote workers to connect and work, simplify their entire IT infrastructure and genuinely solve a number of technology problems that business owners have been trying to work around for years.

So can cloud computing help you? By the end of this guide you'll know, or at least have a much better understanding. Of course, we are always available as a resource for a second opinion or quick question, so please feel free to contact my office direct if we can clarify any points made in this guide or answer any questions you have.

About The Author

I am part of a team recognised by Microsoft with the Gold Data Center competency that help larger IT departments investigate, plan and deploy advanced IT management systems around System Center to provide them with their own private clouds. The same principles that apply to these businesses apply to smaller businesses without their own IT resource.

Our emphasis is on establishing and developing long-term relationships based on understanding our clients' businesses, to provide solutions and services for their IT that help prevent unexpected expenditure and enable them to get the full value out of their IT investment. We are part of a group of companies specialising in business development centered around an established chartered accountancy firm that now includes an FSA regulated financial advisor, property experts and a telecoms division. All the companies within the group work to the same high ethical standards.

5 Critical Questions You Must Have Answers To Before Moving To The Cloud

In this guide I'm going to answer the top 5 questions that I've heard just about every savvy business owner ask about cloud computing. I'll also provide an overview of what exactly cloud computing is and how it can possibly benefit your business.

I've also included some actual case studies from other businesses that have moved to cloud computing.

At the end of this guide there is an invitation for you to request a **Free Cloud Readiness Assessment** to determine if cloud computing is right for your particular business. I encourage you to take advantage of this before making any decisions since we've designed it to take a hard look at the functionality and costs for you as a business and to provide you with the specific information you need (not hype) in order to make a good decision about this new technology.

What Is Cloud Computing?

Wikipedia defines cloud computing as "the use and access of multiple server-based computational resources via a digital network (WAN, Internet connection using the World Wide Web, etc.)."

But what on earth does *that* mean?

The easiest way to not only understand what cloud computing is but also gain insight into why it's gaining in popularity is to compare it to the evolution of public utilities. For example, the evolution of electricity.

Back in the industrial age, factories had to produce their own power in order to run machines that produced the hard goods they manufactured. Be it textiles or rails for the railway and using machines gave these companies enormous competitive advantages by producing more goods with fewer workers and in less time. For many years, the production of power was every bit as important to their company's success as the skill of their workers and quality of their products.

Unfortunately, this put factories into TWO businesses: the business of producing their goods and the business of producing power. Then the concept of delivering power (electricity) as a utility was introduced by Thomas Edison when he developed a commercial-grade replacement for gas lighting and heating using centrally generated and distributed electricity. From there, as they say, the rest was history.

The concept of electric current being generated in central power plants and delivered to factories as a utility caught on fast. This meant manufacturers no long had to be in the business of producing their own power. **In fact, in a very short period of time, it became a competitive necessity for factories to take advantage of the lower cost option being**

offered by public utilities. Almost overnight, thousands of steam engines and electric generators were rendered obsolete and left to rust next to the factories they used to power.

What made this possible was a series of inventions and scientific breakthroughs – but what drove the demand was pure economics. Utility companies were able to leverage economies of scale that single manufacturing plants simply couldn't match in output or in price. In fact, the price of power dropped so significantly that it quickly became affordable for not only factories but also for every single household in the country.

Today, we are in a similar transformation following a similar course. The only difference is that instead of cheap and plentiful electricity, advancements in technology and Internet connectivity are driving down the costs of computing power. With cloud computing, businesses can pay for “computing power” like a utility without having the exorbitant costs of installing, hosting and supporting it.

In fact, you are probably already experiencing the benefits of cloud computing in some way but hadn't realized it. Below are a number of clouds computing applications, also called SaaS or “software as a service,” that you might be using:

- Gmail, Hotmail or other free e-mail accounts
- Facebook
- NetSuite, Salesforce
- Constant Contact, Exact Target, Aweber or other e-mail broadcasting services
- Zoomerang, SurveyMonkey and other survey tools
- LinkedIn
- Twitter
- All things Google (search, AdWords, maps, etc.)

If you think about it, almost every single application you use today can be (or already is) being put “in the cloud” where you can access it and pay for it via your browser for a monthly fee or utility pricing. You don't purchase and install software but instead access it via an Internet browser.

Answers to the Top 5 Questions Business Owners Have about Cloud Computing

Question 1: What if my Internet connection goes down for an extended period of time?

Our Answer: While this is a valid concern that should be addressed in the company's business continuity plan we overcome it in the following ways for our clients in the cloud. Some are setup to use multiple broadband connections with automatic fail-over; others use the 3G/4G mobile network or work from home, a branch office or local serviced office. In addition to the answer below.

Question 2: What happens if the Internet slows to the point where it's difficult to work productively?

Our Answer: We resolve this by keeping a synchronised copy of your data on your onsite server as well as in the cloud. Here's how this works: Microsoft offers a feature with Windows called "DFS," which stand for Distributed File Systems. This technology synchronises documents between cloud servers and local servers in your office. So instead of getting rid of your old server, we keep it onsite and maintain an up-to-date synched copy of your files, folders and documents on it. If the Internet goes down or slows to a grind, you simply open a generic folder on your PC and the system will automatically know to pull the documents from the fastest location (be it the cloud server or the local one). Once a file is modified, it syncs in seconds so you don't have to worry about having multiple versions of the same document. Using this process, you get the benefits of the cloud with a backup solution to keep you up and running during slow periods or complete Internet outages.

Question 3: What about security? Isn't there a big risk of someone accessing my data if it's in the cloud?

Our Answer: In many cases, cloud computing is a MORE secure way of accessing and storing data. Just because your server is onsite doesn't make it more secure; in fact, most small to medium businesses can't justify the cost of securing their network the way a cloud provider can. And most security breaches occur due to human error: one of your employees downloads a file that contains a virus, they don't use secure passwords, or they simply e-mail confidential information out to people who shouldn't see it. Other security breaches occur in on-site networks because the company didn't properly maintain their own in-house network with security updates, software patches, and up-to-date anti-virus software. That's a FAR more common way networks get compromised versus a cloud provider getting hacked.

Our infrastructure is located in one of the UK tier 3 facilities which have full ISO27001 certification. ISO27001 is the internationally recognised auditing standard for the management of information security, and is your assurance that the Centre has the controls and safeguards in place to meet the highest security standards for your valuable data. Perimeter fencing and CCTV coverage points on all internal and external entry and exit points, as well as between rack aisles from which images are recorded and stored. Entry requires a photo ID swipe card and there is manned security on site on a 24/7 basis. UK data centers are not bound by the US patriot act rules so your data cannot be seized by the US authorities.

Question 4: What if YOU go out of business? How do I get my data back?

Our Answer: We give every client network documentation that clearly outlines where their data is and how they could get it back in the event of an emergency. This includes detailed information of emergency contact numbers, information on how to access your data and infrastructure without needing our assistance (although our plan is always to be there to support you), a copy of our insurance policy and information regarding your backups and licensing.

We also give you a copy of OUR disaster recovery plan that shows what we've put in place to make sure we stay up and running.

In fact, you should never hire ANY IT professional that won't give you that information. We also deliver a copy of your data on discs every month so you have a physical copy and back up of the entire network to enable your system to be migrated to another cloud or in house server.

Question 5: Do I have to purchase new hardware (servers, workstations) to move to the cloud?

Our Answer: No! That's one of the greatest benefits of cloud computing. It allows you to use older workstations, laptops and servers because the computing power is in the cloud. Not only does that allow you to keep and use hardware longer, but it allows you to buy cheaper workstations and laptops because you don't need the expensive computing power required in the past.

A Final Word...

I hope you have found this guide helpful in shedding some light on cloud computing. As I stated in the opening of this guide, my purpose in providing this information was to help you make an informed decision and avoid getting burned by the many incompetent firms offering these services.

Below you will find information on how to request a FREE Cloud Readiness Assessment. This is, of course, provided for free with no obligations and no expectations on our part. I want to be clear that this is NOT a bait and switch offer or a trick to get you to buy something. Our reputation for running an honest and trustworthy business is something we hold very dear. I would never jeopardise that in any way. So why are we offering something like this for free?

Two reasons:

1. We are simply offering this service as a risk-free "get to know us" offer to people we haven't had the pleasure of doing business with. Again, our goal is to allow you to make an informed and confident decision; offering this service is one way we can help you better evaluate our services.
2. This will allow us to determine if we even CAN help you. Obviously we can't help everyone and cloud computing might not be a good fit for your particular circumstances. Conducting this Assessment enables us to perform a small service to you and give you a risk-free way of determining whether or not we're the right company for you without risking your money.

Cloud Readiness Assessment

As a prospective customer, we would like to offer you a Cloud Readiness Assessment and cost analysis. This Assessment has three parts:

1. **Cost Analysis And Inventory:** Our first step is to look at what your current network consists of in hardware, licenses, data, and applications. Next, we compile an IT cost assessment to reveal what you spend in total on IT, including Internet connectivity, support and other fees. Most business owners have never really looked at their entire IT costs this way, and often this guide alone is an eye-opener. Why do we do this? Because our goal is to find ways we can significantly lower those costs while simplifying and improving your workflow.
2. **Health Check:** We will perform an audit of your entire network to look for potential problems, security loopholes, spyware and other hidden problems that you might not know about. Often we find faulty backups, out-of-date anti-virus software, faulty firewalls and

missing security patches that, if left unaddressed, could end up costing you MORE in new hardware, support, business downtime and data loss.

3. **Cloud Readiness:** After we've looked at the above areas, we then look at how you and your employees work and share information and see what applications or processes we can safely move to the cloud to improve ease of use and, of course, lower costs.

When complete, we'll give you a Cloud Action Plan that shows you how we can save you money and resolve a number of work-arounds and problems you may have been experiencing to date. Even if you decide not to hire us, having a third party conduct this type of assessment will give you some good information on saving money and the security and health of your computer network.

How To Request Your Cloud Readiness Assessment:

To request your Free Remote Access Consultation do one of the following:

1. Complete and send in the enclosed "Fast Action" response form.
2. Call us direct at 020 8740 6000
3. Send me an e-mail: bill@wem.biz

I will call you to schedule a convenient time for us to meet for 20 minutes. Remember, there is no obligation for you to buy or do anything – this is simply a discovery meeting to see if remote access is right for you.

Bill Jest
Wem Technology Ltd

Fast Action Response Form:

"Yes! Please reserve a Free Remote Access Consultation in my name so I can find out what my options are, get answer to my questions, and get a handle on the steps and costs involved. I understand that I'm under NO obligation to do or buy anything by signing up for this consultation.

Please Complete and Fax Back:

Name: _____
Title: _____
Company: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ Post Code _____
Phone: _____ Fax: _____
E-mail: _____

Do you have any other questions or problems you would like to discuss?
Simply outline them below:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Fax This Form To: 020 8740 2188 or Call: 020 8740 6000