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CUSTOMERS BETTER

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YOUR
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"My income mostly comes from
selling surf prints, both online
and through the gallery"

— EUGENE TAN, PHOTOGRAPHER,
DESIGNER AND OWNER OF AQUABUMPS.COM



IT'S HOW
WE CONNECT



FOLLOW THE CLOUD

Cloud services can cut your IT bills by a huge amount, boost productivity, and banish all those headaches about software updates and data back-up. So is it time you climbed onboard? Here's what cloud experts and small business owners say.

THE EXPERTS



SIMEON JOYCE
Cloud evangelist and general manager of Hosting and Applications, Telstra



BRENDAN DONOHOE
Small to medium business cloud expert and director of Technical Sales, Telstra



OSCAR TRIMBOLI
Cloud application specialist and director of the Information Worker Business Group, Microsoft Australia

THE BUSINESS OWNERS



TANYA TITMAN
Enthusiastic cloud user and director at consolid8 Business & Accounting Solutions, Upper Mt Gravatt, QLD



TRACEY SHARAH
Cloud convert and principal of Metro Accounting, North Sydney, NSW

Which countries are leading the way in cloud services?

Trimboli: Although South Korea and Japan have the advantage of having a small land mass and high-speed broadband, the USA is leading the adoption of cloud computing, especially in small business.

Joyce: Australia is definitely a fast adopter of cloud. As a country we adopt new technology faster than many of our global peers. A recent report from International Data Corporation (IDC) confirmed Australian business's interest in the cloud, with a third already having deployed cloud-based applications.

Which industries have been the fastest to adopt cloud-based solutions?

Joyce: We've seen it adopted across all industries, including small and large businesses. Some of the fastest adopters of cloud are businesses needing flexibility to cope with a sudden rapid expansion, or to access the latest applications without spending time and money on upgrading their hardware.

Trimboli: We've seen strong growth in manufacturing, retail and professional services. Rookie Recruits [a recruitment firm] in Brisbane is a great example of a small to medium business (SMB) who has looked to cloud computing to lower costs and enable new ways of supporting a distributed, mobile workforce, including work-from-home mums.

Accountants have been among the most enthusiastic adopters of cloud solutions. Why is that?

Sharah: Accounting is all about processes and systems, so any technology we can use to get and share information faster increases our ability to deliver better quality, value-added services to our clients. The way an accountancy practice runs is real Ray Kroc stuff [Kroc built the McDonald's chain]. The focus is on servicing the client, and access to real time data has revolutionised the way accounting practices interact with their clients.

Titman: Cloud computing provides a seamless link between accountants and clients, ensuring all parties are viewing the same data. Data can be accessed 24/7, and assistance can be provided by advisers immediately. Without a cloud solution, this process can take a significant amount of time, sometimes two to three days.

There are also no upfront software costs, and upgrades are delivered directly – often with no extra cost. There are no more issues with not being on the latest version of your software.

Why should small-to-medium businesses (SMBs) think about a cloud strategy?

Joyce: Every SMB needs to regularly refresh their IT environment, whether to replace old equipment or to take advantage of the latest technology. Making that decision today without considering the benefits of the cloud means missing out on the potential to grow their capabilities, save costs and stay competitive.

Donohoe: A cloud strategy allows them to focus on core growth and productivity initiatives. It also allows them to reinvent their business model – for example [they can] open up new geographies easily, they can acquire new companies and integrate easily, they can plan for future growth and provide flexibility to their workforces.

"OUR PRODUCTIVITY HAS SKYROCKETED... AND WE HAVE REDUCED PAPER USAGE AND POSTAGE USE BY 80 PER CENT."

How does the cloud help save time and money?

Trimboli: Cloud computing is able to meet small businesses' needs without a large investment in IT infrastructure. As well as having low, fixed monthly costs, it lets small businesses scale up and down easily, as required.

Joyce: When Telstra commissioned independent research in late 2011 from Castalia advisers, the results showed potential cost savings over three years of anywhere up to 70 per cent [over using traditional in-house IT services].

Donohoe: One customer, LaManna Group, a large wholesaler of fruit and vegetables, shifted their data and enterprise resource planning system to Telstra's virtual services because they didn't want to be preoccupied with the outlays and maintenance issues that go with on-premise servers. They were able to do away with their trans-Tasman data line, immediately saving \$6000 a year. An equivalent on-premise solution would have involved outlays of tens of thousands of dollars.

Sharah: For us, the biggest impact has been in reducing the time it takes to process and deliver information for our accounting clients. Our productivity and work turnaround time has skyrocketed – our aim currently is to achieve a constant 10-day turn-around of work. And we have reduced our paper usage and postage use by 80 per cent!

Titman: We have saved our accounting clients money by reviewing the data consistently throughout the year, making year-end work less time consuming and therefore less costly. The overall time spent on the job is reduced by 30 to 40 per cent. This allows more time to focus on business strategy and growth rather than compliance obligations.

How does the cloud boost productivity?

Trimboli: Cloud computing lets businesses work seamlessly on-the-go – whether they are in the office, at a customer site or working from home. That allows employees to be productive from wherever they are.

Joyce: A simple example is Microsoft Office 365 from T-Suite, which provides hosted email, calendar and contacts which are accessible from almost any computer or smartphone. It also allows teams in different parts of the country – or the world – to share and collaborate.

What are the risks of working in the cloud and how can you manage them?

Joyce: Businesses can avoid any risk in moving to the cloud by choosing the right partners for their cloud solutions. That means pairing applications from industry leaders, such as Microsoft, Symantec, VMware and Cisco, with reliable fixed and mobile networks. There's no point in choosing a great cloud solution if it's not paired with a great network that gives you fast, reliable access wherever you need it.

Trimboli: Check the provider's service level agreement. Do they have guaranteed service levels and, if so, what form of compensation do they provide if the service is temporarily unavailable? Also ensure they have adequate disaster recovery capabilities in place if the unthinkable happens. It's also important that you can reach the company if problems occur, so check they have a suitable customer service capability that you can call around the clock if need be.

What are the hot trends in cloud computing?

Joyce: Obviously the hot topic at the moment is mobility – and by their very nature, hosted cloud services are perfect for businesses wanting to access their business applications or even their work desktop via a connected mobile device.

Donohoe: Cloud enables a new level of mobility – the prevalence of laptops, tablets and smartphones means people can seamlessly connect to business systems wherever they are. They are only limited by the quality of their network.

Trimboli: Mobility is driving cloud and cloud is driving mobility.



LEARN MORE ONLINE: Find out how the cloud can help your business at smarterbusinessideas.com.au

How Telstra helps you move into the cloud

Telstra is investing \$800 million in cloud computing over the next five years, and is especially looking at cloud solutions for small-to-medium businesses (SMBs), says Brendan Donohoe. As a result, Telstra now offers a winning combination of secure network connectivity, tailored cloud solutions and on-the-ground support from a growing list of partner companies.

"We're becoming a one-stop shop for all SMB's IT needs. They can put it on their bill, deal with one supplier – and they know they can get support."

"One of the greatest advantages of working with Telstra is our partner network," adds Simeon Joyce. "Over 1000 accredited partners are available across Australia to consult with businesses needing to move from an existing environment into the cloud."

"Telstra can provide cloud applications and services from industry leaders such as Microsoft, McAfee and Symantec, paired with Telstra's reliable fixed and mobile networks," Joyce explains. "Not only does this give you the best of both worlds, you get the convenience of a single bill and single number for technical support for your cloud and network."

HIGH FLYING CLOUD SERVICES

Get the software and data storage your business needs with these great value solutions from Telstra.

Cloud Services Portal

cloud.telstra.com

An online portal for easy access to computing resources, without the complexity of buying, installing and managing hardware and software.

FEATURES

- Buy and manage computing services online.
- Pay only for what you need.
- Start with your own virtual server, then add extra services and features.

BENEFITS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

- No up-front capital investment.
- Complete flexibility to scale your computing resources to match changing business needs.
- The reliability of Australia's largest fully integrated IP network.

Microsoft Office 365 Professional

A cloud-enabled version of the world's most popular business software suite.

FEATURES

- Easy-to-manage email, calendar and contacts you can access from almost anywhere.
- Web-based versions of familiar Microsoft software, including Word, Excel and PowerPoint.
- Collaboration tools, including document sharing, instant messaging and online meetings

BENEFITS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

- Seamless access to Office tools and documents.
- Increased productivity on the move.
- Easy integration with your desktop software.
- Instant scalability, with new starters up and running in minutes.

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