Future View: Cloud Technology

Is cloud the silver lining we've been waiting for?

Ian Kelly, CEO, Sure

Business connectivity has never been more important than in recent months. The global Covid-19 pandemic has brought remote working into the spotlight and demonstrated the value of a technology solution that is just as geared towards remote working as office working.

The trend of remote working is coinciding with the ongoing development in the technology sector. Supply and demand are perfectly matched and we're seeing many businesses across the Channel Islands listen to their staff needs and begin implementing digital solutions that provide remote and flexible working opportunities.

But how do businesses introduce this offering to their teams, continue offering a high level of service to their customers and manage the financial and security implications?

Our partner, Trustwave, recently published a report, Cyber Resiliency in the Multi-Cloud Era, which examines exactly what businesses are doing to change the way they meet consumer demand. And the answer, it concludes, increasingly lies in the cloud.

A Worldwide Culture Change

We are witnessing a worldwide change in how local and national businesses of all sizes are handling their data, so that it can be accessed remotely. Many businesses are ahead of the curve in this area by already providing simple, easy-to-access opportunities to work out of the office, but

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the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted that more businesses were unprepared, illequipped or both when it came to responding to a mass change in working habits.

Accessing emails anywhere, at any time, has been the norm for years now, but accessing files, data and financial systems requires a specialist, secure solution.

As well as cost-saving, high-speed and reliability advantages, cloud technology can be implemented quickly and efficiently with as little disruption as possible for employees, customers and the business as a whole.

It's never too late to provide remote working opportunities through the right technological solutions. Giving your team the power to control their working days requires a degree of trust, but putting that faith in your team will be rewarded with more productive, loyal and grateful members of staff.

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Increased flexibility in the workplace can come with increased risk. Remote working can mean you have multiple dangerous entry points into your business, so how do

businesses make the transition to a flexible working environment while keeping their data safe?

Many believe it's down to the businesses to have appropriate security measures in place, and of course this true. But equally important is training your team on what to look out for and how to use technology.

Channel Islands Privacy Factor
Having your business data reside in a cloud that is hosted in a jurisdiction such as the Channel Islands is a great comfort, as the implications of global data regulations have made the privacy discussion even more important.

The extensive legal checks and balances that exist in each island make them a safe location where sensitive information cannot be inadvertently disclosed. As the islands are self-governed, local privacy Acts exist to control any information gathering by law enforcement agencies, curtailing mass surveillance.

For large organisations, pinpointing sensitive data is difficult enough, but an added layer of complexity is introduced in the form of privacy laws that vary depending on whose data it is and where it's located. Therefore, keeping high-value infrastructure, applications and data here, where regulation is familiar and access points controlled, makes sense.
As networking and cloud security specialists, we are aware of the comfort factor that comes with local hosting and the trust that this gives our customers. "Data certainty" is something we frequently discuss with our customers and by that we mean the absolute confidence that their data resides in the Channel Islands.

In fact, it's one of the reasons why we've developed a unique dual-data-centre solution for our own cybersecurity needs, which is hosted out of our Tier III Jersey and Guernsey data centres.

Channel Islands businesses can choose where their data is hosted - Jersey or Guernsey - and, where necessary,

synchronously replicate, or host a data back-up in the other location. This delivers resilience as well as security, as their data is hosted across multiple environments, providing peace of mind.

This dual-island set-up is ideal for hosting private clouds for companies with data that they do not want to entrust to public clouds and for Sure's own multi-tenant enterprise cloud. Where other public clouds are used, our team of consultants and the specialist security companies we work with act as our customers' trusted partners to address their security concerns.

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The Future Of Cloud
Businesses email, unified communications, intranets, finance and CRM systems have moved away from on-premises equipment to more centralised hosted and public cloud services.

Many organisations' working practices have also changed with the availability of unified connections and collaboration tools in both public and private cloud environments. This has led to fundamental changes in business continuity and the adoption of a distributed workforce supported by the enhancements in cloud architectures. The effects of this have been felt keenly in recent months, but the technology was heading this way anyway.

A new class of application has emerged requiring the computing at the point where the service is consumed. This is driven by a need to reduce network latency delays to enable realtime data, due to developments in technologies such as machine learning (ML), artificial intelligence (AI) and the internet of things (IoT).

More recently, edge computing has enabled the consumption of cloud services in the location of the user's

choice, taking advantage of reduced connectivity costs and near-instant access to data and resources.

The days of centralised cloud service architectures are not quite over yet, and distributed cloud is still in its infancy, but with the growth in ML and IoT, the demand for edge computing is set to rise rapidly.

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The recent situation has highlighted the benefits of a robust cloud-based system to enable employees to work as normal from wherever they are. But the trend towards the cloud was under way long before Covid-19 and many businesses in the Channel Islands are already, at least in part, using the cloud.

Sure's cloud-based solutions provide businesses with much-needed security, thanks to our partnerships with leading cyber-security experts. Our partnership with Trustwave offers the highest level of cybersecurity to organisations to fight the perfect storm of cyber attacks, scams and phishing attempts. According to the 2020 Trustwave Global Security Report, Trustwave's Secure Email Gateway Cloud blocks 99.9% of spam from reaching the recipient.

Optimising IT solutions using cloud technologies has benefits for businesses and their increasingly mobile customers, so finding the right solution really can have a significant impact on the bottom line.

At Sure, we have a team of specialist consultants who can advise on every aspect of cloud solutions - from the right mix of public and private clouds to specific data residency requirements - and how to maximise them to reap significant business benefits.