

# CIO Insights: Cloud Computing—it's not an IT decision. It's a business decision.

*Monday, September 30, 2013 at  
Windstream in Southpark*

A panel of experts brought together by Apparo and its corporate partners assembled to discuss the trends in Cloud Adoption and how companies are targeting this data strategy. Below are key takeaways from the event that cover where cloud adoption saves organizations, who should use the cloud, how to begin implementing the cloud into your current business strategies, and what's trending in cloud computing.

## **What is cloud computing and how does it benefit companies?**

- 'The Cloud' is a network of remote servers hosted on the Internet used to sort, store, and manage data. Cloud computing is used to improve scalability of an organization, efficiency of the workplace, and the overall technology experience while bridging the gap between users (companies) and business goals.
- When implemented successfully, the cloud allows cloud providers to tightly align technology to business priorities; service providers to deliver new services and content to their customers; and consumers to instantly access new services and content. Cloud computing also cuts costs, is accessible from any device, and makes sharing information easy.

## **Understanding the differences in different cloud strategies:**

- Each customer and situation requires a different cloud solution. Companies can use private clouds, public clouds, or a hybrid of the two. Sensitive content (e.g. payroll, human resources files) is most secure in a company's private cloud, and non-sensitive content (e.g. product promotions) on a public cloud.

## **Who should use cloud computing and how does a company get started?**

- CIO's within all organizations must consider some level of the cloud in their strategy. The implementation of **cloud computing is not solely a matter of technology but of best practices for an organization**. Cloud is not an IT decision but a business one. For example,

not only does using the cloud manage data internally (privately), but also allows an organization's consumers and end users to learn about new products and services faster.

- To get started, consider the data/content owner as part of the initial cloud discussion and determine what the cloud means for your company. Cloud computing relinquishes some of the control (especially if using a public cloud), so start small and with non-sensitive information. The cloud is elastic and designed to meet the data management needs of a company wherever it is in the business cycle (e.g. small, midsize, or large corporations).
- Adopting the cloud should be a 3-5 year strategy. The starting points for cloud adaptation strategy incorporates data security, business growth strategies, consumer trends, and overall corporate goals. Companies should determine where they want to be in the future and architect infrastructures to be cloud-friendly as they move forward. Strategies should be built around workloads IT will deliver, and start small to allow employees to become comfortable with the cloud.
- There is a misconception in the marketplace that if your data is in the cloud, it is securely backed-up and cannot be lost. The cloud is not fail-proof—companies must have disaster recoveries in place to protect their data.

#### **What is trending now in cloud computing and what is emerging?**

- Companies are currently sending any non-sensitive data, web-based applications, and small to medium sized databases to the cloud. Start-ups who either don't want to or can't afford infrastructures are managing their data/content in the cloud.
- Most private content is still being kept in-house but a large percentage of workloads are moving toward the cloud.
- Interest in virtual desktop infrastructures or internal desktops is increasing due to the push from the use of mobile devices.

#### **What is the ROI of cloud computing?**

- Most savings from cloud computing come from improved utilization of resources. The biggest soft cost of a company revolves around staff. Implementing cloud computing can reduce the number of staff necessary for an infrastructure to run efficiently. For example, a staff of 6 to manage email systems can be reduced to a staff of one or two by using the cloud. Companies are looking for the low-cost provider and the cloud is ideal for small to medium-sized companies who don't have the funds for additional staff.

***Special Thanks to the Following Panelists***

- *Duane Barnes*, Director of Solutions Engineering, Windstream Hosted Solutions
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- *William Whelpley*, IBM Cloud Services, NA
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