

Cloud Vs. On-Premise Systems – Pros, Cons And Costs



Thomas Fox is president of Tech Experts, southeast Michigan's leading small business computer support company.

A common discussion among the business owners I work with is whether to store their data in the cloud or an on-premise IT system. The

conversation usually starts with the cost implications; however, there are many things that need to be taken into consideration when comparing the two options, such as some of the following:

Cloud

The recurring monthly service cost is often the main and sometimes the only cost factor that is considered when comparing cloud solutions with an on-premise option.

Pros

- Although much is said about cloud solutions outages, public and private clouds can provide much better reliability and uptime than an old, outdated and poorly maintained on-premise system.

- In the long term, the total cost of ownership (TCO) for cloud solutions is much lower than that for on-premise systems for most businesses.

Cons

- Offloading hefty workloads to the cloud demands sufficient bandwidth. Without it, any savings you might be making from not running an internal server could potentially be negated by slowness and productivity loss.

- Similarly, any increased needs in Internet connection costs should be accounted for in an objective comparison of moving to the cloud versus staying in-house. If you are contemplating moving to the cloud, talk to us about the amount of bandwidth you need for your business.

- When dealing with cloud servers, you will often find that while you can move as much data as you wish into the server, transferring data out usually has an associated cost.

- Moving large amounts of data to the cloud may take a significant amount of time depending on your office Internet connection; it may not be enough to transfer these workloads in a timely manner between endpoints.

On-premise IT systems

Many people mistakenly believe that the cost for on-premise systems start and stop with how much they need to pay for new hardware and software.

Pros

- They are more suitable than cloud

solutions for large capacity file sharing of 50GB or more, or for operations that would be bandwidth-prohibitive in a cloud scenario, such as rural offices with weaker Internet connectivity.

Cons

- In contrast to standard computers or laptops, the average solid server has a mixture of multiple-socket processors, dual power supplies, multiple hard drives and numerous other components that all increase your electrical overhead cost. You should also factor in the cost of cooling your hardware, which is critical in maintaining these components.

- On average, organizations replace on-premise systems every five years, which means you will incur upgrade costs to retire old servers. Even if staying in-house may be cheaper than moving to the cloud when you consider the monthly costs, your five-year upgrade or replacement costs could be even more expensive, and opting for cloud solutions may still be better in the long term.

It is worth noting that while one solution may seem more favorable than the other, it may not apply to all businesses.

As such, it is important to objectively compare these factors based on your business needs and make the most suitable decision accordingly.

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Benefits Of Going Paperless



Michael Menor is Vice President of Support Services for Tech Experts.

The “paperless office” has been a concept in American business culture since 1979, when it was first coined

in Newsweek. As the technology improves and becomes more cost effective for small businesses, the paperless office is becoming a reality for more and more small companies. If you are considering going paperless or adopting a document management system, consider these five benefits.

Increased Productivity

Call it a variant of Murphy’s Law — when you need a paper file, it is inevitably located at the bottom of a large stack of files on the floor in the corner of somebody’s office.

For example, law firm personnel can spend literally hours every year looking for paper files. In an industry that typically charges by the hour, that’s not a productive use of time.

By contrast, you can immediately retrieve a scanned file from your document management system. With a document management system, multiple people can retrieve a given document at the same time, improving efficiency.

When you scan a document, you get an image of that file. To convert the image of the text into searchable

text, you can use optical character recognition (OCR) software — often included with a scanner.

Once you’ve made scanned files searchable, it becomes even easier to find them because you can search for any phrase in the document, such as a client name, not just the name of the document itself. This makes it incredibly easy to find invoice numbers or any other information that is usually hidden deep within a document.



other services and make it easier for them to refer your business!

Reduce Operating Costs

Storage costs represent a major expense. Typically, office space is second only to salaries in terms of cost, especially in large cities. As the piles of paper grow, so do your storage costs.

Scanning documents can substantially reduce storage costs by eliminating a significant portion of your paper files and the storage space required to store them. You can then put the space once used for storage to more productive use.

Before you call a shredding company, read your state rules on the retention of physical files, especially in practice areas such as Real Estate or Financial Services.

Even if you have to keep the files for a specified period of time, scanning them will enable you to store them off-site as cheaply as possible. Scanning documents also reduces time spent requesting documents from the file room or even warehouse.

Finally, since you can easily email scanned documents, you can reduce your phone bill by faxing documents less often. Some paperless law firms have even eliminated their fax machines entirely and switched to online fax services.

With a paperless office, you can almost entirely eliminate the costs

Continued on page 4

Improved Customer Service

At one time or another, everyone has been on the receiving end of the dreaded phrase “I’ll have to check the documents and get back to you.” Consider how much happier your customers would be if you could say, “Let me pull up the document now and check for you,” resolving their question during a single phone call?

As an added bonus, the ability to search documents makes it less likely that you’ll overlook that key piece of information. More efficient service means happier clients who pay their bills faster.

Even better, improving your client relations will make your clients more likely to hire your firm for

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What To Do With Electronic Waste – E-Waste



Scott Blake is a Senior Network Engineer with Tech Experts.

devices is what to do with the old outdated equipment.

There are still many people and companies out there who are not aware of why it is so important that you recycle your old electronics. I wanted to go over some of the main reasons why all of us should be joining in.

The Federal government requires that companies producing over 220 pounds of electronic waste tested hazardous be disposed of in proper manners.

There are currently no federal regulations for organizations producing less than 220 pounds of hazardous electronic waste, however many states have become more stringent in the proper disposal of e-waste for both businesses and households.

It is estimated that of the approximately 201 million tons of solid waste generated annually in the United States, at least one percent is classified as computer and/or electronic equipment. Of this nearly 2.1 million tons, only an estimated

One of the biggest decisions a company or home user has to make after making the decision to upgrade their electronic

134,000 tons is actually recycled. Even though e-waste accounts for a small percentage of all municipal waste, it still accounts for about 70% of heavy metals ending up in our landfills.

Some of the toxic materials you can find in old electronics are lead, mercury, arsenic, cadmium, selenium, and more. Computer monitors alone can contain as much as 8 pounds of lead. When these products are just discarded, the harmful toxins will leak out, which is harmful to both the environment and us.



Despite good intentions, much of this nation's e-waste is exported to developing countries, where processing is done under unsafe conditions and endangers workers and nearby communities. Some progress has been made to end this practice through certification programs. One such program is e-Stewards.

Researcher's estimate that between 50 and 80 percent of electronic waste from the industrialized world that winds up in the hands of "recyclers" actually goes to a few developing countries: China, India, Pakistan, Vietnam and the Philippines.

There, the unregulated materials are crudely handled in acid baths and burn pits, releasing into the air and soil heavy metals and chemicals that are used to make flexible plastics and flame retardants.

Studies of individual scrapping facilities in Ghana and China have measured contaminants and toxic metals like lead present in soil at more than 100 times typical background levels.

According to e-Stewards, recyclers who meet their certification requirements don't export to developing nations. They follow safe practices for the handling of electronic waste, and adhere to other standards. Many will also reuse and refurbish equipment.

Lastly, when you choose to recycle your electronic equipment; make sure to choose a certified electronics recycler, that way you are ensuring that any data stored on your device is completely removed.

When you just toss an old computer in the trash, you risk having the right hacker find his or her way to your sensitive information. With so many reasons why you should recycle, it is hard to believe that some people could still put their old laptops in the trash.

If you have questions on how to properly recycle your electronic equipment; give us a call and we will answer all of your questions.

Need help? Call the Tech Experts 24 hour computer emergency hotline at (734) 240-0200.



Contact Information

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Summer Travel Laptop Tips

If you're traveling with your laptop, you may need to carry a few accessories. These include adapters, surge protectors, converters, wireless Internet cards, Ethernet cables and a high-quality carrying case.

Power supply

If you're traveling overseas, you need to consider possible international voltage differences and plug sizes and shapes. While the United States and Canada both use 110-volt electricity, the rest of the world runs on 220-240 volts.

Fortunately, most laptops can comfortably run on both voltages; however, check your computer label or owner's manual to be on the safe side. If it runs on 110 only, you will need a converter.

You will also likely need an adapter so your plug can fit into the local outlets. Most countries have one or more adapters that are unique

or that they share with a few close neighbors.

Surge protection is critical while traveling, particularly if you are traveling to a country where electricity is not reliable. You will need a surge protection electrical strip for whichever voltage you will be using, bearing in mind that surge protectors for 110 and 220-volt currents cannot be interchanged.

Internet connection

Most hotels offer either wireless or high-speed Internet. You may want to call ahead and find out what is available.

Many hotels will provide a Wi-Fi connection, which is helpful, since your laptop has its own built-in wireless network adapter that can search out the nearest wireless signal. Remember to ask for the hotel's signal password at the front desk. You can also buy a wireless note-

book card, if your laptop does not have an internal wireless network adapter. This would also be helpful for connecting to the Internet in WiFi hotspots in airports, libraries and coffee shops.

Some hotels will require that you plug into their Internet connection using an Ethernet cable. You should bring your own cable just in case one is not supplied to you by the hotel.

Extras

Your computer will more than likely take a few hits while you move around, so a sturdy padded carrying case could save you a lot of frustration and money.

You might also want to bring along a device onto which you can back up your work, just in case the hard drive crashes. An extra laptop battery might also come in handy, along with screen cleaners.

Benefits Of Going Paperless, Continued

of printing, such as copy paper, ink and toner. With toner being one of the most expensive liquids on the planet, this can equal huge cost savings for your small business.

Better Security

Paper documents are subject to two risks — physical theft and destruction from a variety of disasters (fire, flood, etc.). When you scan confidential documents, you can restrict access to your eyes only. For example, you can limit the access of sensitive information or specific case files to select people.

Law firms subject to federal and state regulations regarding the protection of client information will

find compliance significantly easier with scanned documents. Also, replacing a digital file is much easier than trying to replace a file cabinet destroyed by fire or flood.

Environmentally Sound

If environmental issues are important to you and your business or you have clientele that care about these issues, going paperless can boost your status in the community. For example, digitization of your files will result in fewer photocopies, reducing company paper consumption.

The less we use today means the more we leave behind for future generations. If you are part of the

Green Revolution, making your business paperless is a great place to start.

Going paperless will save your firm time and money — but be wary of anyone selling you a magic software product that will fix all your problems. Like anything else, you get out of it what you put into it.

There are many organizations that can help with this type of solution, but make sure their company culture matches your own. After all, the last thing you want is to try and go paperless with the help of Xerox or any copier company whose main interest is in hardware and consumables.