



7 Trends in the Cloud

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1

IT champions the cloud.

One of the biggest changes emerging in the cloud market is the attitude of IT. Successful cloud applications such as Salesforce and Workday, and cloud infrastructure leaders like Amazon, gained early traction with business groups looking to bypass IT roadblocks. Today however, IT is often the chief sponsor of transitioning to the cloud.

Why? Well, the single most important consideration for IT when talking cloud is security. And this change means that IT is getting more comfortable with cloud security. Cloud vendors can provide 24/7 support, scale, and test and apply patches quickly. That's harder for internal IT departments to support.

Once they get comfortable with security in the cloud, IT departments start to take advantage of the opportunity to get out of the business of setting up and maintaining physical hardware. Instead they get to focus on larger strategic initiatives like prototyping cloud data ecosystems and enabling self-service analytics within their organizations.

For more, see this excellent article in Wired by Peter Kretzman: [IT Consumerization, The Cloud, and The Alleged Death of the CIO.](#)

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2

Cloud analytics means all analytics.

In the early days, cloud analytics was for cloud data. Now cloud analytics is for all your data no matter where it lives.

As organizations adopt a hybrid data architecture, they are demanding that analytics vendors support both cloud data and on-premises data. Cloud services like Birst and Tableau Online offer advantages when connecting to data in the cloud, but also allow you to work with critical on-premises data.

For more, see Datanami: [Tracking the Rapid Rise in Cloud Analytics](#).

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3

Virtual private cloud is the new “in-house” cloud.

With more vendors offering software that spins up easily on virtual machines in the cloud, “in house” infrastructure is increasingly in the cloud as well.

While the management and administration of the virtual machines still falls to the customer, the hosted environments offered by Infrastructure-as-a-Service players offer an attractive alternative to setting up physical servers.

For figures, see Gartner’s Thomas Bittman: [Some Perspective on the Explosion of VMs in the Cloud](#).

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Platform prices keep dropping, like rain from the sky.

Barely a quarter goes by without an announcement of lower prices from the major cloud platform vendors.

- In May, Google Cloud Platform announced price reductions of 5%- 30%
- In December Amazon Web Services announced reduced rates for data transfer
- In September, Microsoft reduced prices for several Azure services

At this point in the industry life cycle, a staggering amount of computing power is coming online, at lower and lower prices. This offers a great tradeoff to companies leveraging the cloud.

New products also offer opportunities to save money. For example, Google's Preemptible VMs give you a better price for jobs that run on Google's schedule, not yours. Likewise, Amazon Web Services' acquisition of startup ClusterK bodes well for companies that like to use EC2 Spot Instances (unused AWS compute resources that can be bid on below market price) since the fledgling tech company helps streamline resource usage.

For further reading, see [Business Insider: This One Chart Shows The Vicious Price War Going On In Cloud Computing.](#)

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A thousand cloud formations will emerge and break up.

The cloud is in an extremely creative period. New services are coming online all the time, and fast-moving customers can gain incredible advantage.

But as in any period of creativity, there is also destruction. Smaller companies will falter as the market consolidates. The wealth of offerings from the platform vendors will likewise be rationalized.

Luckily, one of the main advantages of the cloud is its spin-up, spin-down nature. This will ultimately come to the rescue of customers. Over time, as with every great wave of innovation, we'll see early adopters converge on winning solutions, and the early majority will flock to those.

Forbes recently published a list of the top 100 cloud startups according to a MoneyTree report.

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6

Identity floats. SAML and SSO become the norm.

In the last age of enterprise software, an employee's identity lived in ActiveDirectory. As data and applications move to the cloud, so will identity.

Organizations will see Single Sign-On (SSO) as a critical component of cloud services, to avoid having employees need to sign on in multiple places in the course of one workflow. Identity-as-a-service companies like Ping, Okta and OneLogin are pushing forward products that provide SSO across applications, both cloud and on-premise, with credentials stores in the cloud.

For more, read CRN: [When Identity Access Management Platforms aren't Ready for the Cloud.](#)

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7

Cloud data environments turn the data fortress into a bazaar.

Building a data fortress used to be the go-to model for companies trying to do analytics, but cloud infrastructure solutions have introduced a wholly different approach.

Instead of a single mammoth system designed to both store and process data, cloud options now let data reside apart from compute resources for pennies on the dollar.

This means at the flip of a switch, even the most massive of data assets can be moved into high-compute data-processing pipelines for everything from data discovery to the heaviest of data transformation jobs. Companies now get to choose when they want to pay higher price-per-byte costs for their data...and for how long.

For more, see Werner Vogel, the CTO of Amazon, on [All Things Distributed: Observations on the Importance of Cloud-based Analytics](#).

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