



Security in the Cloud: “Is my valuable business information more secure in a remote data center or onsite?”

Mystery continues to shroud the cloud.

On the one hand, we entrust so much of our daily lives to the cloud without even thinking about it. For starters, businesses routinely employ popular cloud-based applications such as Dropbox, Google Drive, Google Docs and Gmail, not to mention omnipresent social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook. Your company’s email is a great example of a cloud-based application that you likely never even consider at risk to malicious attacks. Because your email isn’t stored on your personal computer, it’s always accessible to you in the cloud.

On the other hand, when it comes to the question of whether or not it’s safe to rely on the cloud to host a business application such as an ERP solution, there is a lot of uncertainty and fear that still persists. And that’s understandable, given the fact that security is often a company’s top priority, especially if mission-critical applications are involved. Let’s face it – ceding protection of our priceless business data to a third-party’s remote servers does require some trust.

“In a recent study of IT decision-makers by BT, half (49%) admitted they are ‘very or extremely anxious’ about the security implications of cloud services – an increase of 10% from BT’s previous research conducted in 2012. More than three quarters of the respondents (76%) said that security is their main concern when it comes to cloud-based services and – most alarmingly – 41% believed that all cloud-based services are ‘inherently insecure.’”¹

So, given that so many IT decision-makers are uncomfortable with hosting their business solutions in the cloud, we can see a disconnect between perceived risk and genuine risk. If we base our risk perception on whether there are nefarious villains out in cyberspace who are determined to hijack our mission-critical information, that risk is real and it’s in play 24/7/365. All servers, whether on-premises or in the cloud, are almost equally susceptible to potential attacks from malicious sources. Thus, the next consideration is where will your business get better protection from the inevitable attempted assault – onsite or in a hosted data center?

The lingering lack of confidence in cloud-based solutions is fueled by a common misconception that data will be more secure if we maintain absolute control by keeping it in-house. But consider this – with all the data you entrust to the cloud every day, how often have you actually encountered a successful attack that compromised your data? Despite all the risks, “never” is the most likely answer.

The bottom line is that **cloud computing is a very safe and secure proposition**. Think about it – companies that host your data go to incredible lengths to ensure that nobody can launch a successful attack on your company’s proprietary business information. Typically, their data center is manned by a team of highly skilled engineers, database administrators, security personnel and customer support staff, who are available around the clock to ensure your mission-critical applications and data are never compromised. That’s their business.

In addition, considering how quickly news of a data breach gets out into the public arena, no hosting provider wants the negative exposure and bad publicity associated with a failure to provide the critical service that their customers hired them to provide.

One other advantage of cloud computing is that it enables you to employ a hybrid approach – combining in-house and cloud-computing software, if you already have servers and an IT staff on-board. In this case, you may determine that one application, say, an ERP solution like **SAP Business One Cloud**, is the best option to manage all your ERP processes - but you can still maintain some deployment of your other business processes onsite. This mix-and-match strategy has generated significant dividends for a growing number of SME companies around the globe.

¹ Ben Rossi, “The great IT myth: is cloud really less secure than on-premise?” *Information Age*, March 9, 2015.

Please contact Barry Lederman: 818.704.7000, blederman@softengineusa.com.