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Whitepaper

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How to move your IT systems to the cloud

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Rewind to March 2020. Businesses' way of working was changed almost overnight with 88% of UK businesses encouraging working from home to come into immediate effect.

97% of all businesses cancelled work-related travel in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Today, many people are still working from various locations, whether that's from their homes or maybe they're back in the office for just a few days a week.

This in itself can pose a problem.

For instance, how do you ensure that everyone stays connected and able to work effectively?

That's where the cloud comes into play.

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Confused about what the public cloud actually is?

Every business uses computers in one way or another. These are usually linked to shared folders or a network. In the past, this may have been managed by an on-site server where applications would also run.

Over the last decade or so, some businesses were moved to private data centres or the private cloud, which is essentially the same thing but off-site.

The **public cloud** is now taking over and means that businesses are utilising the services of large cloud providers, such as Google and Microsoft.

When businesses move to the cloud, it can be described as **'digital transformation'**.

Secure. Accessible. Collaboration.

By combining **industry-leading apps** with robust cloud services, the Microsoft Cloud lets people create and share on any device, from anywhere in the world.

Digital transformation and cloud subscription services bring together **the best tools for the way people work** using Microsoft 365 and Azure. Here's how -

Microsoft 365

Integrated, flexible and collaborative working. Always up to date and includes tools, like Outlook and Teams, to solve real-world business problems.

Azure

Flexible pay-for-what-you-use pricing options and the freedom to manage and deploy applications on a secure global cloud network.

A few of the benefits.

- Rock-solid cybersecurity
- Truly mobile
- Avoid heavy cyclical investment
- No more bulk servers

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Whether that's fires, floods or a national pandemic, cloud computing is a solution that ensures, wherever your employees are based, they are all connected to the people and systems that are needed for them to work.
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Are Citrix and remote desktops in the cloud?

Theoretically, yes. Citrix and remote desktops are in the cloud. However, they're not in public cloud. Simply put, if your firm uses **remote desktop packages** such as the Citrix system, it allows users to interact with legacy applications which run on the firm's central infrastructure (network).

Remote desktops enable the user's PC to act as a window to access the servers remotely. The user's PC does not run the software or store the data but instead operates as a device to control **a more powerful system**.

In essence, it becomes a computer to access another computer.

The introduction of Citrix and the remote desktop was initially good for two reasons.

1. It allowed users to begin to operate within networks at distances.

Remote desktops like Citrix permitted users to **access applications regardless of their location**, which was important as firms started outsourcing work to more cost-effective geographies,

2. Users were able to access office software and didn't require powerful machines to run applications; a firm just needed a powerful centralised infrastructure.

This centralised infrastructure allowed for greater **control over security**. It's how most firms ran their IT and as a result now have systems based upon this idea. However, remote desktops are now somewhat dated, and the technology has moved on significantly.

What's more, it's considered to be very high cost as it requires a **significant investment in infrastructure**, and it can be extremely slow and difficult to setup.

Why move to the public cloud instead?

We understand that **SMEs can't always afford to be making investments**, especially at the moment, and it can be tempting to delay making any changes for as long as possible. However, now is the perfect time for businesses to decide on the most optimal way to **overcome any remote working issues and be better prepared for whatever happens** next.

The first steps of a cloud IT transition

When it comes to transforming your team's way of working by moving operations to the cloud (instead of using an expensive server), **one size doesn't fit all**. So if you want your business to grow faster, be modern and efficient and attract and retain the best staff, you need to find the right partner to help you implement the change.
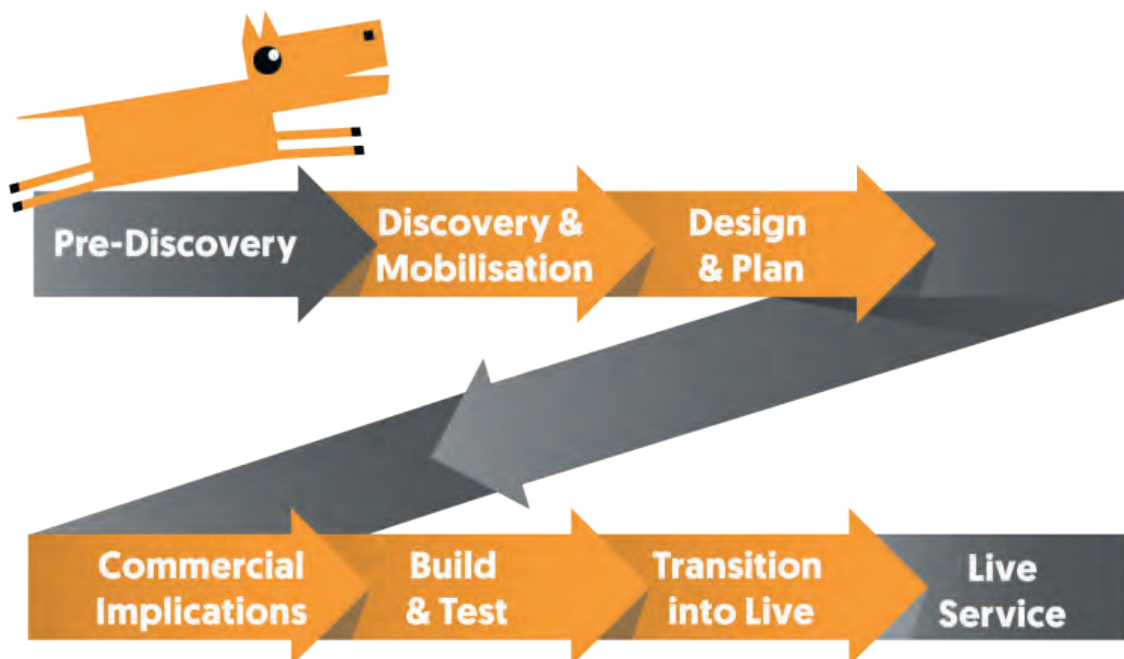
Before making any big decisions, your cloud partner should spend time **understanding your operations**, inside and out. They need to know exactly what makes your working environment tick on a day-to-day basis, and the best way forward.

They should also be experienced enough to know that businesses are now not limited by their existing applications and old legacy software. With the right partner, **any application or software can now be moved into the Microsoft cloud** environment.

The right way to move to the cloud.

Every business is different and requires a **unique set of measures** to help deliver management objectives.

The **best methodology for cloud transformation** allows your IT company / integrator to create a long-term design that dives deep into the **unique requirements of your business** and wraps a service around your business goals.

Pre-Discovery → Discovery & Mobilisation → Design & Plan → Commercial Implications → Build & Test → Transition into Live → Live Service

The most effective way to move to the cloud.

Your IT provider should be a **business-first focused firm**, providing an IT strategy that is **fit for purpose** and designed to work in tune with the strategic and cybersecurity needs of your business.

Whether you're looking to fully outsource your IT for end-to-end management or looking to co-source services to complement your in-house expertise, they should be able to deliver a cloud service that **addresses your challenges** and **enhances business performance**.

Smooth transition to the new way of working.

Once your operations are in the cloud, your IT provider should be on-hand to provide **thorough support and answer any questions you might have throughout the journey**.

You should be able to benefit from **automated document workflows**, allowing you and your team to work to the best of your capabilities.

What's more, the provider / integrator should **empower customers with a new skillset and enhanced knowledge** to enable them to better understand their systems with the help of tools such as the Microsoft Cloud Academy.

Plus, once you're all set up, you should be able to easily arrange resources into a **learning and training programme** for the rest of your team's personal development, so they can follow along at a time that suits them.

Everything is accessible, from anywhere in the world, when you need it most.

Extech Cloud has helped many businesses transition to the cloud. Here's what they say.

Kagan Moss

"We have found Extech Cloud to be the source of reliable advice with good systems for dealing with upgrades, maintenance and emergencies."

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Hunters Law LLP

"We chose Extech Cloud as they were able to demonstrate they could pull all of our technologies together properly to make us more efficient, while saving us significant capital expenditure and licencing costs."

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Richard Place Dobson

"The people we have worked with have managed to complete a very complicated build, during a very stressful time and at all times communicated with us in a way that we understood."

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Extech Cloud has **supported growing businesses for over 30 years** and has helped customers achieve efficiencies and gain a competitive advantage through the use of technology.

We've spent years **refining the process of cloud transformation** for businesses just like yours and our team of experts can help you **start your journey to the Modern Workplace** straight away.

What makes us cloud IT experts?

As the South's **leading digital transformers**, Extech Cloud empowers every person within an organisation to accomplish more. We help businesses grow faster, keep the best staff and optimise efficiency, creating a modern workplace.

To date, we've successfully conducted over 100 transformations. At Extech Cloud, we're **continuously looking for new ways to reduce your costs** wherever possible and to ensure that you're working as smart and productively as possible.

Our purpose is to engineer a flexible community, empowering organisations and their people to achieve more.

Ready to make the jump to the cloud?

Contact us to get started.

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