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5 ways cloud computing could damage your business…

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Cloud computing allows you to access your applications anywhere, from any computer or mobile device connected to the internet.

Information is safe and always available. Applications are always fully up-to-date. And you don't have the downside of the cost and hassle of physical servers or loading software onto computers.

But there are a number of vital considerations that you must make before you decide to switch key applications to the cloud.

The upsides of cloud computing are huge – and when it goes wrong the downsides can literally cripple your business.

Here are the five ways cloud computing could damage your business:

1. **The possible points of failure are out of your control:** The beauty of cloud computing is that you hand over all the hassle of supplying and updating applications to someone else. But loss of direct control has a price. If something goes wrong you are relying on someone else's sense of urgency to get it fixed. The upside to this is that when cloud-based apps go down, they tend to affect all users, giving the providers an enormous incentive to get things fixed quickly.

2. **You might not have a service level agreement (SLA):** Some businesses like the peace of mind provided by an agreement. They are not always provided by cloud app providers –

but as I said above, when your entire business is delivered through a website, you move mountains to get it back up and running again when something is wrong.

3. **Your access to information is controlled by your internet connection:** Many businesses say they could not run without an internet connection. When all your data is in the cloud and is accessed through your internet browser, this is especially true. Lose the net and you lose access to your information. The upside of this is that if you lose the ability to access your premises, for example, your staff can work from home using the applications they use at work – but on their home computers. Cloud computing is very flexible.

4. **Your confidential and secure data is hosted by someone else (possibly outside the UK):** Losing data can have a catastrophic impact on your business. It's estimated that a very large percentage of companies that irretrievably lose their data go out of business within 12 months. This is an important consideration when you are going to trust another company with your vital data. On the positive side, cloud application providers are highly aware of this weakness and deal with it effectively. They back up more regularly and rigorously than you could do in your business, including making multiple copies of data and storing it in several physical locations.

5. **Migrating your data to the cloud can be a headache:** In fact migrating data between any applications is painful. That's why we always suggest you leave it to experts who do it day in, day out, and know what problems could arise; how to spot them; then deal with them quickly.

You see, while there are downsides in using cloud computing for your business, the upsides are huge. The benefits significantly outweigh the risks… especially if you partner with a company such as NIS that safely and securely migrates businesses to cloud computing all the time.

Let me spell out five significant upsides of cloud computing that our clients enjoy:

1. **Applications are lower cost and much more scalable:** Cloud-based applications are often designed to be purchased on a user by user basis. So your bill grows as your demand grows. This is an efficient way to scale a business.

2. **You never have to interrupt staff to update software on their computer:** Cloud apps are accessed through a normal internet browser, such as Internet Explorer, Firefox or Google Chrome. The applications are constantly being updated centrally by the provider with no software to download or install. You just go online, visit the website, login and it simply works.

3. **You don't have the headache or cost of hardware upgrades as your business grows:** Because there is nothing to download or install, it's quick and easy to get new staff up and running on applications. They just need an internet-enabled computer – the kind that works straight out of the box. It's fast and easy.

4. **You can access data anywhere at any time, under any circumstances:** Should the worse happen and your premises are hit by fire or flood, there's no worry about your data or how you access it from temporary premises. It's just there, in your app, online, ready for you to access immediately. Or, let's say you really want to access your data from a beach in Hawaii using your mobile device. That's your choice – you'll find your data sat there waiting for you.

5. **Your need for expensive IT support is dramatically reduced:** This may sound odd coming from an IT support company. But we have grown significantly over the last few years by helping our clients spend *less* on IT, not *more*. Our business is built on solid long-term working partnerships. Unlike most IT companies, we don't just want to sell you a load of IT services then ignore you. We'd rather help you find the most appropriate solutions, then support you for years to come.

NIS advises businesses across the UK how to use cloud computing to dramatically slash IT costs while improving business efficiencies.

Its engineers are experts in cloud computing and the safe delivery of cloud solutions to all size of businesses.

The company continues to maintain several recognised partner accreditations with industry movers such as Microsoft, IBM and Cisco, ensuring a long term commitment to recognised IT standards, first class staff training and customer satisfaction levels.

To discuss how cloud computing can cut your costs while improving productivity, please call NIS on 0845 130 0258, or email **sales@nis-it.co.uk**