

Cloud Hosting: Private or Public?

Making a business case for cloud computing is becoming increasingly popular. However, determining the right cloud solution requires thorough analysis regarding the level of security, control, customization and support your business needs. What is the measuring stick for the success of your cloud deployment project? The simple answer is to create more satisfied end users who will realize additional cost and flexibility benefits to their organizations. By answering the right set of questions, your cloud configuration requirements will become clear.

Private versus Public Cloud

The potential advantages of cloud computing are well documented. If designed and provisioned properly, cloud deployments can lower capital and operating costs, increase flexibility and reduce complexity. You need to weigh the benefits gained from using one type of solution over another. When making the decision between private and public, it is useful to consider the following questions:

Q What level of security do your applications require?

A Private cloud solutions usually run highly sensitive, mission-critical, proprietary applications, whereas public clouds typically host development or test environment applications. With certain private clouds, your application sits within your own dedicated hosting environment, complete with firewall and multi-layered security features such as role-based security and intrusion detection. Within the multi-tenant environment of a public cloud, you follow the rules of the shared community.

Even though public cloud security rules are stringent, they usually cannot be changed to meet the specific needs of individual companies. If your organization has certain security policies that dictate how mission-critical applications are accessed, classified and deployed, then you might be better suited to use a private cloud. If you need support for traffic peaks on non-classified material, a public cloud is often a better choice for cost conscious organizations. For this reason, let application and traffic trend considerations help direct your decision between an enterprise-grade private cloud and a public cloud solution.

Q What level of control and customization do you need?

A Your IT organization may require highly customized environments for each individual application. If so, keep in mind that certain configuration flexibilities may not be available in a pre-defined, commoditized public cloud. For example, configurations that require complicated networking designs or specialized hardware components may be difficult to accommodate in a public cloud.

A private cloud runs multiple applications for one customer, whereas a public cloud supports a variety of applications for multiple customers, thus restricting choices for those public users. Furthermore, a private cloud is delivered through a managed service model, whereas a public cloud is often delivered through highly automated means. Consequently, your ability to be prescriptive about build and run requirements for your applications will be more robust in a private cloud.

The private cloud environment can be adapted to meet your specific needs. You make the decisions. This level of control and customization does not exist within a public cloud. As a result, a private cloud solution may be an easier first step into a cloud environment, especially if you are not ready to redesign applications suited for a public cloud.

Q What type of support services do you expect with your cloud solution?

A In most public clouds, customer service typically does not exist in a 24/7 type model, but may be available at an additional cost. However, public cloud users are generally comfortable with this reduced level of support and do not expect highly interactive dialogues with their cloud provider. In a private cloud environment, users receive enterprise-grade support and a dedicated account team.

Consequently, for complex environments with sensitive applications, an enterprise-grade private cloud with a superior support model is the most appropriate solution. The support team in this scenario will be more intimately involved with your infrastructure and network personnel, providing hands-on support when you need it most.

Q What are your cost and flexibility expectations?

A Choosing a public cloud solution can be less expensive due to its commoditized attributes, whereas the customized traits of a private cloud can increase costs. A public cloud is highly economical for variable workloads, while a private cloud may be economically attractive for stable, predictable application uses. If you have a small business without the need for an expansive data center footprint or unneeded overhead, the public option may be your best choice. However, it is important to consider all relevant costs in order to make an informed decision. For example, support costs are often missed in determining the true cost of moving into a public cloud.

A public cloud may give you greater flexibility with no contracts or long-term commitments. Furthermore, a public cloud typically offers more elasticity or “burstability” — giving users the ability to rapidly scale their solutions to meet planned or unplanned peak loads. A private cloud also has the ability to quickly scale, but is limited by the build-out of the existing environment. Both options are superior from a scalability perspective than in-house deployments that may require procuring, deploying and configuring new hardware to meet scalability demands.

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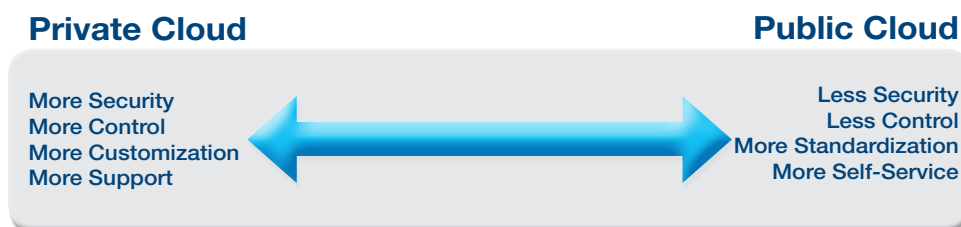
Q What stipulations will you have with respect to availability and performance?

A Once the customization and support models are defined, you should review the solution’s overall performance and availability. It is important to note that the network beyond the cloud represents the greatest risk to an enterprise; availability and performance are only as good as the network. Therefore, your provider should ensure that your solution does not end at the cloud, but instead encompasses an end-to-end approach from the cloud to the end user.

Public vs. Private Cloud

Enterprises need to select a cloud hosting model by evaluating each application or workload individually, as the security and customization requirements may differ greatly. For example, web content for public distribution may not need the same levels of security and control as a company’s ERP applications. Enterprises may end up leveraging both private and public cloud solutions for different initiatives or applications.

Regardless of your particular deployment, it is imperative to select a solution that delivers an enhanced end-user experience and superior availability. From the cloud to the end user, Internap will help you identify and deploy the best solutions for your business needs.



Contact us to learn how Internap can solve your IT challenges by enabling you to focus on your core business, improve service levels and lower the cost of IT operations.

877.843.7627 | contactsales@internap.com | www.internap.com