

## Are you considering moving your infrastructure to the cloud?

It can be a great way to improve the reliability, availability and performance of your IT infrastructure, sometimes at a significant savings over the cost of building and maintaining your own. For maximum benefit, though, it is extremely important that you evaluate what type of cloud services are the best fit.

Here are the three of the most common approaches to cloud services and things you should keep in mind as you weigh your options.

### **Public**

These services are delivered as a price-driven commodity over a public network shared by multiple organizations. They are often called “multitenant” solutions since they are a bit like an apartment building with multiple rooms for rent. Your company will be one of many with applications and data riding on the same underlying infrastructure.

Public cloud solutions deliver great scalability benefits. You simply ramp up or down as needed. Though public cloud services are aggressively priced, you may or may not save money. Your bill can vary widely based on fluctuations in demand. Some companies report costs doubling or tripling in a single month, making it a challenge to meet budget commitments.

If it is important for your company to comply with HIPAA, HITECH, SOX or similar requirements, the public cloud may not be for you. You may not be able to establish an audit trail or even control the country where the systems serving your company are based.

### **Private**

Private cloud services are engineered and operated exclusively for your organization.

It's like renting a single-family home instead of living in an apartment complex. Your service provider takes care of everything, so you don't have to worry about buying, managing and maintaining systems. Instead, you simply access your dedicated infrastructure over the Internet or a highly secure private network connection.

Private cloud services can be scaled just like a public cloud, but at a fixed, predictable price. That means no surprises. You also will know precisely where your new virtual infrastructure is hosted and what physical and network security measures are in place. You can establish a clear, end-to-end audit trail for compliance-sensitive data.

You also can control your security options in a private cloud to a much greater degree than with a public cloud. If you want a Cisco ASA with FirePOWER, it can be integrated. Need CloudFlare? No problem. Multiple networks, DMZs and load balancing? All are simple in a private cloud. In a public cloud, though, you are limited to what they have for firewalling, logging, monitoring and more.

Ultimately, private cloud solutions provide all the advantages you would have if you owned your own systems, but without the associated headaches, burdensome capital investment and operating costs.

### **Hybrid**

Some companies opt to take a “hybrid” approach to the cloud that blends the best features of public and private solutions. They rely on a private cloud for their production systems, financials, disaster recovery and other business-impacting functions where regulatory compliance matters and there is no margin for error. They use the flexibility of the public cloud to support testing and other noncritical projects of short duration that spin up and then are quickly concluded.