

WHAT ARE THE KEY DRIVERS?

Clearly there is an increasing appetite for Cloud, primarily driven by:

- The potential savings from the **transfer of costs from capital spend to operational expense**. This alone is an attractive option for government departments and private organisations alike struggling with budget deficits and associated cost reductions.
- Improved collaboration and universal access – in other words, anytime, anywhere access both within the organisation and with external partners. Given the mobility of today's workforce, this is an attractive feature.
- The opportunity for organisations to outsource those IT services that IT departments are struggling to provide, or to provide 'as built' solutions immediately, rather than the months or even years it may take organisations to build customised, in-house solutions. Why not buy rather than build?
- An additional driver for adopting Cloud solutions is their scalability. This means that organisations can upscale or downscale their IT requirements as and when required, without incurring significant capital outlay.



WHAT ARE THE KEY CONCERNS?

- Data security and privacy are typically seen as the main hesitation in Cloud adoption.
- Reluctance on the part of CIO's from the perspective that their value as a service provider may be diminished as Cloud adoption gains momentum.
- From a longer-term perspective, it may be the case that overall IT cost savings and return on investment may not be as attractive as originally thought.

FOCUSING ON MIGRATING TO THE CLOUD

CONTENT MANAGEMENT IN THE CLOUD

From the perspective of most organisations Cloud is seen, as an IT solution to whatever problems they might be experiencing, or opportunities they are trying to grasp. Hence decisions about migration are generally made by IT, together presumably, with the business.

So where does this leave content management?

Unfortunately, IRIS's experience with its clients demonstrate that organisations still experience significant problems locating the required information when they need it.

To make a successful transition to the Cloud, organisations need to have fundamental control of their information assets.

This issue is caused in part by the:

- Sheer volume of information,
- Lack of Governance,
- Non-compliance with policy,
- Proliferation of mobile devices, and
- Numerous, non-compliant legacy systems.

At the heart of all of this, is the fact that the business may not recognise that its information content where ever it is captured or stored is a **core asset** to the organisation and should be governed, managed and planned for with the same care and due diligence as financial assets.

Until 'content is consistently controlled, and managed the true benefits of Cloud will not be achieved.

One example of the expected benefits of moving to the cloud is 'collaboration'. One of the key players in this area was Microsoft's SharePoint, whilst it is acknowledged that the software system itself is unlikely to be the cause of any failures, what happened with those SharePoint deployments?

Research indicates that in many cases expectations with SharePoint have not been met or progress has stalled, and this is most likely due to lack of governance and or poor information/content management. The system became just another information or content silo.



The point here is that if it is impossible to manage a collaboration workspace internally 'on the ground so to speak', **why do organisations think these problems will be solved by migrating collaboration to the Cloud?**

HOW TO ADDRESS THESE CONTENT MANAGEMENT ISSUES

If Cloud migrations are to really improve organisational performance and deliver anticipated cost savings, information/content management **MUST** be part of the planning equation.

If information content was under control before formal planning for Cloud commenced, it would be possible to better determine what Cloud solutions are really required – for example, the potential size requirements for data storage facilities.

So what needs to be done?

In our view, organisations need to take a long hard look at their information content environment and establish a solid framework for how information will be managed from this point forward, and **before** the commencement of **Cloud migration activities**.



This would involve a number of progressive 'building block' activities:

- Clarify business objectives and priorities. This might seem to be stating the obvious but it is often the case that much of the organisation remain unaware of the organisation's key business objectives, or why good information/content management is critical to the successful achievement of those objectives.
- Clarify the organisation's business critical information assets. You don't need to manage everything but what is business-critical?
- Understand your information/content (not IT) architecture. Where is all this information? Who owns it? Who uses it?
- Establish Information Governance. Without information governance, whether in-house or in-Cloud, **you are doomed to fail**.
- Establish an Information Management Framework that contains all the fundamental elements for good information management.
- Align information management with IT infrastructure – sounds obvious but this is so often overlooked.
- Work with the business to facilitate change and the new ways of working.
- Undertake regular reviews to monitor progress and address issues at source.

CASE STUDY

THE PROBLEM

- Out of date licences
- Access Issues
- No management standards
- Non-conformation to ICT Policy

Company X is a medium sized Government organisation situated in regional Western Australia and has funding constraints and an increased need to deliver services as fast and efficiently as possible.



Accessing Cloud based services and technologies appeared to be one good way for this organisation to address its need to deliver services fast and efficiently and within their current funding constraints.

Unfortunately the Cloud based applications did not deliver the expected benefits and outlined below is a summation of the problems they encountered:

- Each business unit for one reason or another allowed their Cloud licences to lapse.
- Each business unit is now unable to access the information they had added to the Cloud and at this point in time they need access to it.
- There was random unauthorised access and use of Cloud applications by various business units each accessing different Cloud applications.
- Accessing Cloud applications in this ad hoc manner is in direct contravention with the organisation's ICT Policy.

As a result it is clear that there are three fundamental questions which had to be addressed:

1. How can this organisation resolve the issue of not being able to access their information
2. How can this organisation ensure this doesn't happen again
3. How can this organisation take advantage of the Cloud in an effective way

CASE STUDY

THE RESOLUTION

- Governance
- Establish policies and procedures
- Monitor business units
- Achievable and practical goals
- Review ICT investments
- Develop requirements document
- Develop a Cloud migration strategy



The answer to these questions in brief are as follows:

Question 1

Accessing the information stored in the cloud may initially be resolved by re-licencing the Cloud applications which hold their information. However the organisation should only consider this if they have already addressed the answers to questions two and three above.

Question 2

- Ensure there is Governance over ICT,
- Establish ICT policy and procedures,
- Undertake regular monitoring by ICT of what's happening in the business units, to ensure what has happened above doesn't happen again.

Questions 3

- Clarify what is this organisation's business-critical information and establish how that information is to be consistently managed across the organisation – i.e. a solid and holistic approach to managing information in the context of business goals and objectives. There is no point in considering migration to the Cloud if information is poorly managed prior to migration – in fact it will make matters worse
- Review existing investments in ICT hardware and infrastructure – is Cloud a feasible option given these investments?
- If so, what aspects of Cloud best meet the organisation's needs?
- Develop a detailed requirements document that includes essential aspects of contractual requirements that must be met, such as an exit strategy that will facilitate the organisation having ongoing access to information which has been stored in the cloud after the organisation ceases holding a licence to that Cloud application.
- Develop a Cloud migration strategy that takes account of current and future business needs, information management approaches and ICT architecture and future strategies/plans

In summary, migration to the Cloud requires careful planning, good information management practice embedded in business processes, and a clear understanding of the costs and business benefits. All these considerations **MUST** be addressed in order to fully inform the requirements document that will underpin the selection of the required cloud technology and contractual arrangements with the Cloud provider.

IRIS has many years of experience in helping organisations resolve their information management issues and as a result we have a well-developed understanding of the potential problems associated with overlooking information management when planning transitions to the Cloud.

Ultimately the fundamentals of good information management apply as much in an outsourced environment as they do in-house, and must therefore be part of the equation when organisations are planning to move to a Cloud-based vendor.



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