

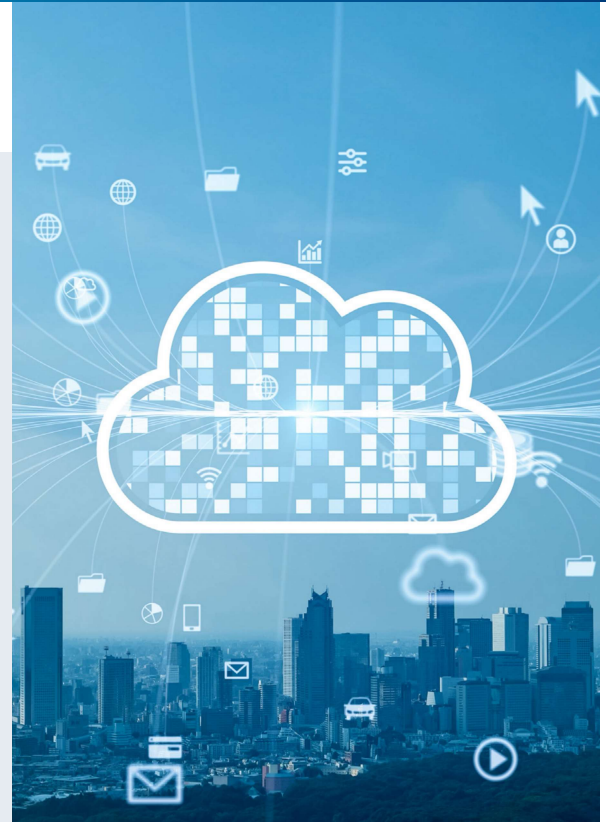
Is It Time to Move to the Cloud?

The public sector's embrace of moving to the cloud is transforming the national data landscape. Local governments of all sizes, school systems, and special districts are increasingly recognizing the value of moving from on-premises servers to cloud-based, software-as-a-service (SaaS) solutions.

The trend is accelerating. Up to 60% of organizations will use an external service provider's cloud-managed service offering by 2022, doubling the percentage of organizations from 2018, according to Gartner.¹

Moving data and systems to the cloud reduces capital expenses, improves IT efficiency and data security, ensures access to the latest technology, improves internal connectivity, and strengthens community engagement.

Below are five benefits of moving to the cloud.



Reduce capital budget needs

Purchasing and maintaining the infrastructure required for on-premises hosting is costly. Because of this high cost, organizations sometimes keep systems running past their ideal retirement date. The result of maintaining aged systems, which may have hard-to-find replacement parts, is that organizations don't have access to the latest software and security safeguards. Also, unexpected hardware failures can play havoc with IT budgets and staffing.

In comparison, cloud-hosted SaaS solutions offer clear-cut costs that are easy to plan for, eliminating unexpected expenses. The organization simply pays a subscription fee, and the software provider is responsible for the hosting infrastructure. Top SaaS providers use reliable, up-to-date technology, which means organizations don't need to worry about aging infrastructure.

The cloud makes budget planning more predictable and saves money in the long run by eliminating expensive equipment purchases and maintenance.

Minimize the burden on IT

Maintaining on-premises servers 24/7 requires a sizable commitment for IT staffs that are already stretched thin. Removing the onus of maintaining servers frees up time for IT departments to concentrate on work that directly impacts the lives of community members. Additionally, the burden of performing backups, restoring software, and maintaining data shifts from the organization to the provider.

Taking the pain out of software upgrades is a key benefit of moving to the cloud. Less disruptive and more dependable than on-premises updates, cloud-based upgrades are handled by the provider, and these upgrades are typically automatic and more frequent, ensuring that software is always up-to-date.

Eliminating the onus of overseeing on-premises servers frees up IT resources that can be redirected to better deliver services and solve community issues.

¹ Gartner. (2019). Gartner Forecasts Worldwide Public Cloud Revenue to Grow 17% in 2020. <https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2019-11-13-gartner-forecasts-worldwide-public-cloud-revenue-to-grow-17-percent-in-2020>

What is SaaS?

Software as a service (SaaS) is a subscription model in which client data is hosted in the cloud, rather than on-premises. SaaS eliminates the need to install and run applications on individual servers. It streamlines maintenance and support because functions can be managed by a software provider, including applications, servers, storage, and networking.

Improve security and disaster preparedness

Keeping data secure is a full-time job. Experienced cloud providers employ teams of security experts to make sure data is safe. While you might think your on-premises data is secure, how confident are you that your IT resources are comprehensive enough to ensure 24/7 security?

A vendor with decades of cloud-hosting experience for the public sector understands the critical importance of security and will use the latest technology along with a highly skilled team of specialists to keep data secure.

Equally important, the cloud environment provides superior disaster recovery capabilities. Unlike on-premises software solutions, which can be vulnerable to localized events such as flooding or fire, cloud-based solutions benefit from widely dispersed, redundant storage. This redundancy ensures the information is always available despite disruptive localized events. Ideally, disaster recovery should be included in your provider's SaaS solution.

The cloud is a more reliable environment because of increased security, automated backups, and server redundancy.

Benefit from scalability

We are all familiar with the rapid pace of technological change and the growing expectations of our communities. To meet these needs, the public sector must continuously improve its technology capabilities to allow residents to access government services online and via mobile devices.

As expectations evolve, so must the public sector's software systems. As discussed above, increasing the capabilities of on-premises servers to handle growing demands is a costly and complicated process. On the other hand, cloud solutions are designed for scalability, so when the needs of a community grow or change, systems and storage can easily increase. This is achieved without the need for organizations to make costly hardware purchases.

² Statista. (2020). Percentage of Mobile Device Website Traffic Worldwide from First Quarter 2015 to 4th quarter 2019. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/277125/share-of-website-traffic-coming-from-mobile-devices/>

Because of its inherent agility and flexibility, cloud hosting is well poised to help government and school districts of all sizes in times of crisis. Whether supporting remote working or scaling up to meet the digital needs of the community, the cloud is built to help the public sector meet community needs.

The scalability of cloud solutions increases functionality and eliminates the need for expensive hardware that will be outdated in a few years.

Access the latest technology and improve connectivity

Selecting a top provider for a cloud-based SaaS system ensures access to the newest technology and software. Keeping up-to-date in a cloud environment is not dependent on budgeting for, purchasing, and installing new hardware, or waiting for the IT staff to deploy software upgrades. Instead, in a cloud solution a dedicated team of specialists frequently updates hardware and software to improve functionality and to ensure the latest versions are in place.

A cloud solution also keeps organizations connected internally and with their communities. It is ideal for connecting workers in the field to data systems, keeping decision-makers informed of information and progress from any location at any time, and for streamlining connections for remote workers.

Finally, a cloud system is built to allow mobile functionality, which is increasingly important because, as Statista notes, more than half of all internet traffic is from mobile devices.² As mobile use continues to increase, engagement opportunities grow. Whether paying utility bills on the go or consulting online FAQs about trash pickup, community members are counting on mobile engagement.

A cloud solution keeps software up-to-date and enhances remote and mobile capabilities for internal and external connections.

If you'd like more information about how cloud applications can help you, contact us at info@tylertech.com or visit [tylertech.com](https://www.tylertech.com).