Cloud adoption remains slow in spite of direct benefits

Cost savings, reduced infrastructure requirements and time savings to drive increased uptake, says Greg Lock, solutions architect at Itec.
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While the use of cloud is increasing among South African businesses, it seems adoption remains relatively slow. According to the Cloud in Africa: Reality Check 2013 research study released by World Wide Worx and Cisco late last year, 50% of South African medium and large businesses are using cloud services. When compared to the results of the IP EXPO Corporate Cloud Survey released in 2011, this shows only a 4% increase in cloud adoption.

According to **Greg Lock**, solutions architect at Itec, this is in spite of the direct benefits that cloud technology brings to organisations – both big and small. "From a document storage perspective, cloud computing provides a cost-effective, infrastructure-light solution to organisations," he says. "The cost savings associated with implementing a cloud solution relates back to physical costs, infrastructure costs and significant time savings, which all contribute directly to the bottom line."

The software as a service subscription model means organisations only subscribe to the services they need and can manage their costs more effectively. "Not only does this include all expenses for storage, management, maintenance and support, it also reduces the cost associated with infrastructure and hardware as the client no longer requires expensive server equipment on-site," says Lock. In addition to the cost reduction, cloud-based content management allows for much more flexibility and scalability in capacity, while providing robust sharing capabilities even in the most mobility-driven environment.

"A cloud-based document management solution simplifies the task of making sense of hundreds of documents as it organises these files with metadata," says Lock. This makes it easier to find documents when needed. "It also allows for auto version control and is far more secure," he adds. Built-in encryption means that even an administrator will not have access to the data unless they have access rights, yet it is often concern around security that prevents companies from adopting cloud technology.

"Security concerns remains one of the biggest concerns our clients have, because there is a perception that they will be losing control over their data," says Lock. "Cloud service providers spend millions on security on an annual basis to ensure that their environments and thus the data they store on behalf of clients remain secure at all times." Cloud-based solutions also provide more control over data sensitivity and allows clients to hide sensitive documents while maintaining a single repository for all their data and documents.

Cloud solutions also provide greater protection against data loss through hardware failure or other incidents. "By storing and managing information in the cloud, clients eliminate the risk of losing their data when a physical device is lost or damaged, as data is regularly backed up to the cloud." Backups are done over multiple geo-locations and on multiple servers to eliminate risk. "These backups are done on a regular basis, dependent on the client requirements, and every quarter, physical backups are sent to the client," he concludes.

Itec
Itec is southern Africa's fastest growing and third-largest office automation, production printing and telecommunications solutions provider – with annual revenue of nearly one billion rand. Through its 46 South African branches and an international footprint that includes the United Kingdom, the company implements total office solutions based on imported, industry-leading, and award-winning products.

Itec serves medium-sized and large businesses in sectors as diverse as financial services and retail **–** supporting its innovative solutions with proactive service delivery. Some of its 18 000 customers include Value Logistics, Implats, Department of Housing, Business Connexion, ADT, Rand Refinery, First National Bank, Anglogold Ashanti, National Health Laboratory Services and Advtech.

Itec management rebranded the company in 2004 following a merger of the separate copier, printer, and fax business units initially established in 1987.

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Editorial contacts

Headlines
Lizelle McDermott
(+27) 11 887 3422
lizelle@headlinespr.co.za