

# 8 Reasons for Cloud Computing



[code-459070\\_1280](#)Cloud computing means that instead of storing software or data on your laptop, a portable hard drive or on a server, your applications and data is stored and managed on the Internet and accessed online. Businesses often use the cloud to store and share data or to access software (called “software as a service” or SaaS). Cloud computing or SaaS, allows you to run your business through your browser.

Like most small businesses, you’re already using cloud services and probably don’t even realize it. Here’s a closer look at how cloud computing can and will benefit your small business.

## 1. Security

It’s not uncommon to hear about data breaches affecting huge corporations, such as Target, Home Depot and of course, the recent issue at Sony. If big companies aren’t protected against hackers, malware and viruses, you can only imagine the vulnerabilities of your small business. Enterprise organizations can afford fines and lawsuits associated with a data breach, but these costs will typically close the doors on any small business.

Just because it hasn't happened to you, don't assume you're safe. Small businesses are typically less protected from online threats, making them the perfect target of online hackers. Reputable cloud service providers help by offering better security than the average small business owner can provide. Accessing your software or storing your data in the cloud ensures it is protected by experts whose job is to stay up-to-date on the latest security threats.

## **2. Simplicity**

Installing new software, patches and upgrading to new versions is time consuming. Most small businesses can't afford an in-house IT specialist so they outsource to IT consultants or rely on an office "volunteer" to stay up to date. Either approach costs time, money and creates a hassle. Plus, it can even put your business at risk.

Using cloud-based software avoids all of this and makes your life so much easier. All updates are handled automatically off-site by the cloud services provider and are completely transparent to the end user. Updates such as security enhancements are completely invisible, but you reap the rewards by avoiding having to install patches or new software versions.

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## **3. Continuity**

Natural disasters, theft or accidents can destroy a business's critical data if it's stored solely on-site on a laptop or server. According to [FEMA](#), between 40 to 60% of small businesses affected by a disaster never re-open their doors.

Software as a service (SaaS) and cloud storage services continuously update your business data and applications online so they're always safe from any disaster and can be easily restored. Backups are automated, removing the risk of human error.

If your on-site server goes down or if a snowstorm prevents employees getting to work, cloud services can ensure your business continues to move forward. Your data and software are safe, resting comfortably in the cloud so you can continue to operate.

## **4. Mobility**

Working remotely is a benefit for many employees. In addition, many small business owners often work outside of the office, in the evenings and over the

weekend. Cloud-based services give you and your staff the flexibility to work from anywhere, anytime. No more emailing yourself files. No saving files to a thumb drive. It's life—less complicated.

Cloud services usually offer a full range of functionality via any mobile device. Using a [mobile app](#) on your smartphone or tablet affords even greater convenience, especially with business owners on the go. Plus some mobile apps even offer two way interaction with a small business's clientele; for example a [client portal](#) to receive [invoices](#) and make online payments. The latter can make a big difference in cash flow.

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## **5. Collaboration**

Employees, contractors, partners and vendors can all work on the same document or record in real time. Let's say your employee [tracks time](#) and enters it for a project at the end of the day. Let's also say the employee has paid for some office supplies, and [expense tracking](#) is completed online as well. The office manager can view the time entry, thousands of miles away, and verify and approve the expenses so it can be invoiced. This eliminates any bottlenecks and enhances your revenue stream. Cloud services encourage collaboration, streamline processes and ensure everyone is on the same page.

## **6. Affordability**

One of the biggest advantages to a small business is the cost savings. Cloud computing has low or no up-front costs. Instead of a significant one-time payment for a software license and on-going maintenance fees, then additional fees for upgrades, cloud-based providers typically offer subscriptions that spread the costs over time.

## **7. Scalability**

Cloud services enable small businesses to better manage growth. As your business grows, there is never the need to purchase costly hardware or software. Just increase your subscription and relax. Conversely, if you need to contract a bit due to a change in the market, cloud services makes it easy.

## **8. Flexibility**

Cloud services offer infinite flexibility to small business owners. Most cloud service providers offer free trials or demonstrations so you can try before you

buy. If you like the product, you enter your credit card number and viola! That's it. If you change your mind, cancel. It's as simple as that. There's no need to install or uninstall software, fulfill a long-term commitment or haggle over a refund.

## **The Bottom Line**

Cloud-based software and services offer small businesses the same level of sophistication as large enterprise organizations. Small businesses can leverage powerful, secure applications that were previously too costly due to licensing and hardware costs. With the subscription model, businesses can easily afford high-end products where costs are spread over time.

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