

Cloud Computing: What Does and Doesn't Fit - IO



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Running applications in the cloud can save your business both time and money, but only if you know what you're doing. The truth is, not all business applications are equally suited for use in a cloud environment. That's because the cloud works better with some types of applications—such as virtualized apps—than others.

Confused? Don't know what to do? Don't worry. Here's a quick look at today's leading application families and how well they fit into a cloud environment.

Virtualized Applications. *Excellent fit.* The cloud not only likes virtualized apps, it thrives on them. The best way of ensuring cloud success is to only use applications that have been optimized in terms of CPU, storage, interface and network performance. In fact, it's best to conduct a data center-wide virtualization effort before even considering a move into cloud computing.

Database Intensive Applications. *Good fit (But be careful.)* Databases and cloud computing are compatible, but in some situations the two technologies don't play well together. The cloud is highly suitable for storing large volumes of unstructured data and archival material, such as credit card and mortgage applications medical records and general file archiving.

On the other hand, high velocity database applications, running hundreds of thousands of transactions per minute—as database apps run by banks, retailers and other businesses often do—can struggle within the cloud. Such applications are governed by hardware limitations that exist inside all IT environments, so there's often little or no benefit to sending them into the cloud. Check with your provider to see if your database application can thrive in the cloud.

Disaster Recovery Applications. *Excellent fit.* Cloud computing provides an ideal data recovery platform. Information stored safely in the cloud can be accessed anytime, anywhere. If a fire, flood or any other calamity strikes your

business site—or even your entire community or state—your data will always be safe, undamaged and ready to use the instant you’re ready to restart operations.

Disaster recovery/business continuity experts have always advised businesses to regularly store a set of data backups at at least one remote location. Cloud storage takes this practice one step further by eliminating the need to find and pay for a secure storage facility while removing the cost and trouble of physically transporting backup media to the remote site. Cloud storage also allows data to be backed up continuously rather than periodically, greatly lessening the chance that any critical data will be lost forever.

Regulated Industry Applications. *Good fit. (But be careful.)* Businesses in tightly regulated fields, such as finance and healthcare, are increasingly using cloud technology to satisfy mandated data storage and data integrity requirements. Yet using the cloud to meet regulatory mandates requires using a provider that’s mindful of its customers’ demanding compliance needs. Not all cloud providers are able to meet industry-specific requirements, so you’ll need to discover how a provider will address your particular needs and responsibilities before committing to a service relationship.

Network Intensive Applications. *Good fit. (But be careful.)* You’ll need access to the fastest and highest quality network resources when moving a network-intensive application—one that frequently sends large amounts of data to or from other apps or services—to the cloud. Play close attention to network attributes such as capacity, latency, redundancy and routing flexibility when investigating a cloud services provider.

Bottom line. Cloud computing is arguably the most powerful and useful IT technology to arrive within the past decade. Cloud computing’s potential to help your businesses achieve new levels of cost and process efficiencies is virtually unmatched. What’s left for you to do is to use cloud computing in the areas where it’s most effective and while steering away from potential roadblocks.

Tags: cloud computing, Disaster Recovery, virtualization

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