

How to deliver
business value
with hybrid cloud



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The growth of cloud, the shifting attitude to remote work and security and compliance concerns means that we are very likely to see the continuing acceleration of hybrid cloud adoption across Irish business. Enterprises can leverage the agility, scalability, and flexibility of hybrid cloud and continually look for new ways to reduce costs and build revenue.

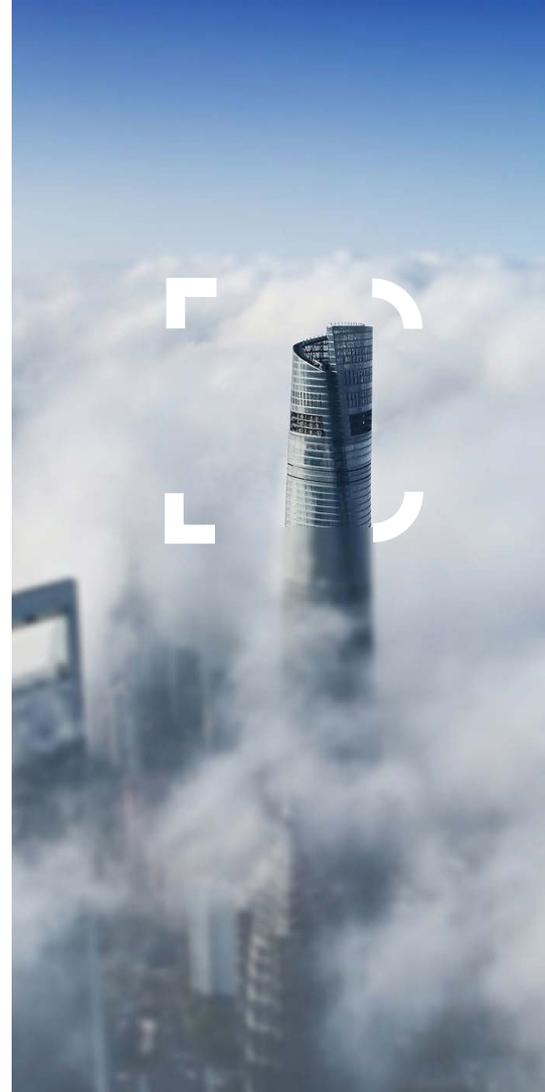
Hybrid cloud requires enterprises to maintain applications in both public and private cloud, usually exchanging data across both. Many businesses are looking to deploy hybrid cloud applications in third-party data centres to reduce CAPEX costs and access public cloud services, without the cost of investing in capital-intensive proprietary data centre build and management.

Finding the right blend of cloud technologies, platforms and environments for your cloud strategy will help your business become more flexible, scalable and adaptable, setting you up for digital transformation success.

To meet that aim, we're increasingly looking at a hybrid future. Flexera 2022 State of the Cloud Report claim that 80% of enterprises are pursuing a hybrid IT strategy, while 89% are embracing a multi-cloud strategy

This research points to a significant trend in enterprises moving from operating and hosting their own cloud environments, towards hosting their data with third-party services outside of their own control.

Of course, for many Irish enterprises the act of 'going to the cloud' remains hindered by the burden of legacy IT and compliance concerns. However, the very nature of hybrid cloud enables you to take a tactical approach to increasing your cloud capabilities. As you become increasingly comfortable with how to approach it and realise the benefits of doing so, you can up the number of applications, services and workloads that sit across various cloud environments.



Unbounded cloud opportunities

Cloud is now essential to not just reducing business and IT costs, but providing the flexibility required for digital dominance. Only through the cloud is it possible to provision new environments on demand and make computing processes more efficient, scalable and automated. The beauty of hybrid is that it enables you to shape your cloud environment to your needs as and when you need to, and as your cloud confidence grows.

With a hybrid strategy you can move workloads to the most appropriate environment, balancing performance and risk factors on an individual basis. So if an application is particularly sensitive or if you have concerns regarding data privacy, sovereignty and availability, you can juggle running various types of cloud infrastructure.

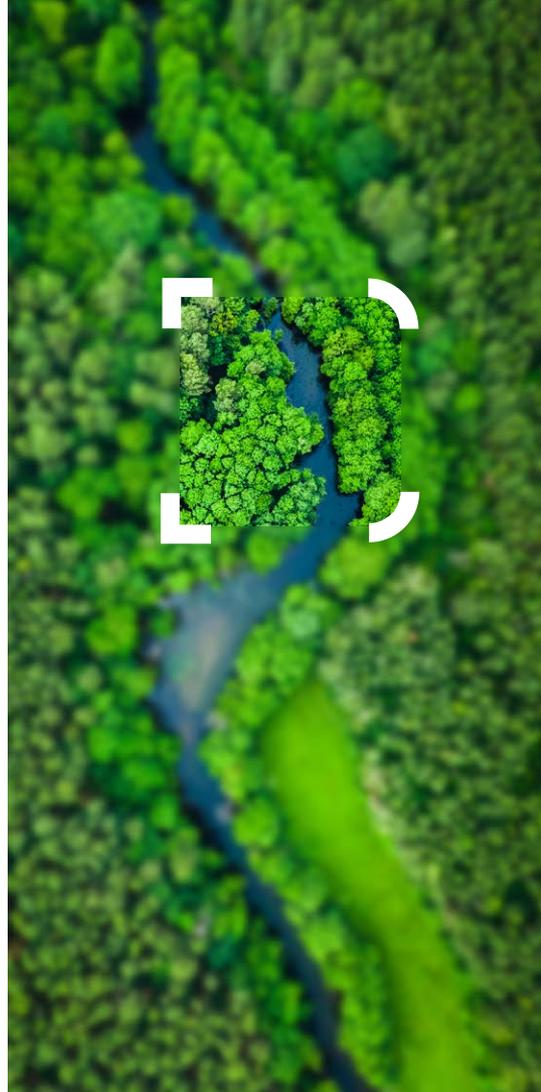
Wherever you are on the cloud adoption journey, the flexibility and choice of hybrid will help you find the right path to becoming more efficient and ultimately make your business more competitive.

Always deliver for customers

Being seen to be 'up to date' with the ever-evolving trends in technology is critical to satisfying customers and ensuring you're always one step ahead of your competitors.

Lacking the flexibility to absorb extra customer demand risks losing their business, and swiftly becoming irrelevant and unable to compete.

Legacy systems are not fit for purpose, which is where a hybrid environment comes into its own. Businesses can scale their needs at will to ensure they reactively meet even the most extreme, unexpected spikes in demand while retaining control of their physical infrastructure. With this in mind, how can your business deliver more value with the cloud?



Seven key steps that will lay the foundation for a successful hybrid cloud environment

1. Preparation is Key

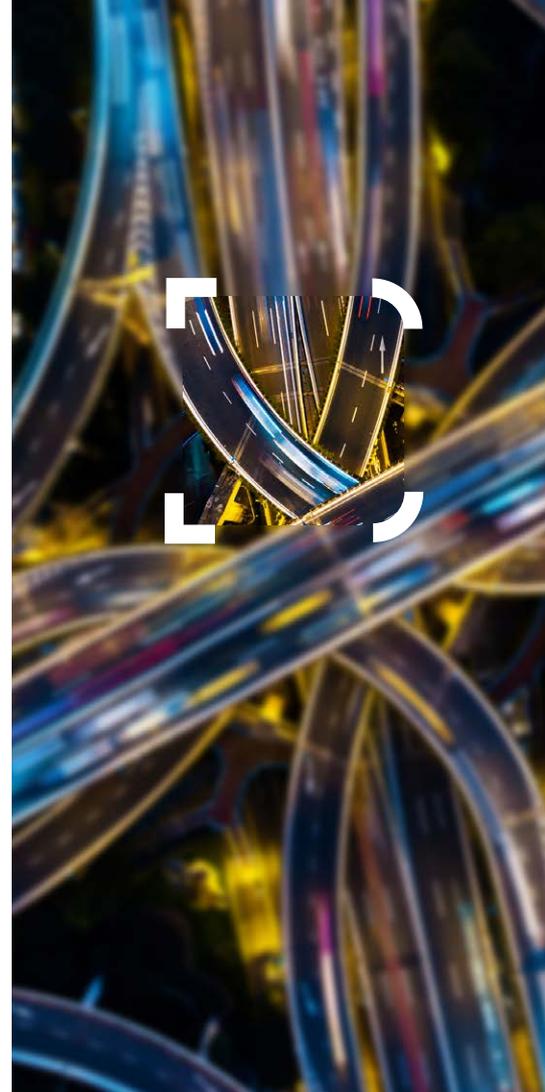
- a. Not every application is suitable for the cloud. It's important to understand which applications you want to deploy in or out of the cloud and the potential benefits and pitfalls of moving them from your private data centre to the cloud. You're likely to have a mix of versions of applications, a mix of new, old and unused applications and a range of unauthorised applications that you'll need to decide whether to keep or cull.
- b. Questions you'll need to consider in this process include:
 - Does the application include sensitive data?
 - Will the application's location affect compliance?
 - Is the application business critical?
 - What are your disaster recovery requirements?
 - How is the data secured?

2. Create your cloud vision and needs

You'll need to consider which data, applications and workloads need to sit in which cloud environment. But you'll also need to define the model of cloud you want to deploy, and how you want to integrate Infrastructure-as-a-Service, Platform-as-a-Service, Software-as-a-Service and so on. Another key consideration here will be your migration path to the cloud, depending on your need for speed, performance, scalability, and cost saving.

3. Guarantee your service requirements

A vital component to your cloud deployment will be defining key metrics through a Service Level Agreement (SLA). This is key to guaranteeing performance of and access to applications and data, and ensures your cloud architecture reflects changes in your business process. Achieving this is only possible by setting a benchmark, which will provide an indication of how applications use resources, levels of performance being achieved, and additional levels required.



An effective SLA will also ensure certification and conforming to international standards for data centre operations for power efficiency, security standards and more. The SLA is also the starting point for avoiding potential failures, helping you define a clear process to disaster recovery, ensuring response times, how issues are notified and potential compensation costs in the event of a breach.

4. Get internal buy-in

Migrating to hybrid cloud isn't about one team or department gaining the glory. It's an organisation-wide approach, so get everyone involved to ensure that cross-departmental business requirements are catered for.

5. Choose your IT Service Provider

This is important as a good systems integrator understands the complexity of large projects. Their entire business model is built around helping customers understand multiple platforms and deploy their infrastructure in the most effective way. They will also be key to delivering on your SLA and identifying and rectifying potential SLA breaches.

6. Take control of your cloud journey

Now you've made the leap into the cloud, is it all working as it should be? And is it all joined up and running smoothly? Ensure you're getting the best possible results and performance.

7. Think to the future

If your business continues to grow and your cloud requirement increases, can your current resources grow accordingly? Do you have the in-house skills to manage that expansion?



Conclusion

Cloud can no longer be dismissed as a fad, or a new tool that's simply nice to have. The digital age is driving businesses toward a major overhaul of the way they operate and a revolution of their traditional infrastructures. The benefits that operating a hybrid environment will bring your business are core to this shift, and failure to adapt and evolve could see you left behind. But speed, agility and flexibility have to become ingrained across the organisation, so you can't rush into it. Hybrid cloud has to be embraced to ensure business benefits across the organisation, rather than for convenience or to be seen to be following the latest tech trend.

Find out how PlatformDIGITAL® can help you on your hybrid cloud journey.

Talk to an expert

About Digital Realty

Digital Realty brings companies, data and technologies together by delivering the full spectrum of data center, colocation and interconnection solutions. PlatformDIGITAL®, the company's global data center platform, provides customers with a secure meeting place for their data. A place where businesses power innovation, can go faster and further, invent the unseen, and expand across the globe. Digital Realty's global data center footprint gives customers access to the connected data communities that matter to them with 290+ facilities in 50+ metros across 26 countries on six continents. To learn more about Digital Realty, please visit digitalrealty.com or follow us on LinkedIn and Twitter.

