FAQ's

THE FLEXIBLE WORKPLACE

Q: I'D LIKE TO ELIMINATE AS MUCH EQUIPMENT FROM MY OFFICE AS POSSIBLE. CAN EVERYTHING BE MOVED TO THE CLOUD?

Perhaps yes, perhaps no. A 100% cloud-based environment requires that Cloud versions of all essential software be available, and suitable to your needs. Many businesses find it necessary to migrate slowly, beginning with what is known as a "hybrid" environment, mixing Cloud-based solutions with other resources hosted internally. While the elimination of internal solutions can reduce server requirements (space, CPU power, RAM, etc.), organizations unable to completely (or at least significantly) reduce their need for local server resources may find it fiscally prudent to forego migration to the Cloud until enough essential services are available to permit eliminating their in-house server(s).

Q: HOW DO I KNOW A CLOUD-BASED APPLICATION WILL MEET MY NEEDS?

It is rare that the Cloud-based version of a pre-existing software solution will have the exact same functionality. Cloud-based solutions should always be thoroughly tested by the people that will be using them BEFORE committing to make a switch.

Q: WILL CLOUD APPLICATIONS PERFORM AS FAST AS LOCALLY HOSTED APPLICATIONS?

Generally speaking, no. Presently, it is rare for organizations to have Internet bandwidth that rivals local network speeds, which can be as fast as 10GBps. That said, the better question is "Will I notice any material performance difference when using a Cloud-based solution." The answer depends on the application you are using. For "light", text-based applications that require minimal bandwidth, it is common for users to see no appreciable difference in performance. For applications requiring large amounts of data to be transferred, performance differences can be noticeable.

The answer to this question also depends on how fast the relevant Internet connections are. In cases where users are frequently connecting from their homes to an office location with a slow or over-taxed Internet connection, they may actually experience better performance when connecting to Cloud solutions, where Internet bandwidth is typically in greater abundance. Again, it is highly recommended that applications be tested thoroughly before making any switch. Testing should include not only using the solution, but printing, scanning, and performing virtually every task the solution will be required to do.

Q: I'VE HEARD GOOD THINGS ABOUT SOFTWARE-DEFINED WAN (SDWAN) TECHNOLOGY. WILL IT REMEDY THE SLOW INTERNET SPEEDS WE ARE EXPERIENCING WHILE WORKING REMOTELY?

This question can only be answered after conducting a thorough evaluation of your network environment. SDWAN is amazing technology, and under the ideal circumstances, it can improve performance significantly.

Unfortunately, when the bottleneck is a slow residential Internet circuit, improvement can be marginal. Most telecommunication infrastructure was architected to place emphasis on bandwidth availability in commercial locations. In early 2020, the unprecedented shift to "work from home" and online education strategies in many locales placed a significant burden on residential Internet service providers. The resulting performance issues are such that in most cases, they can only be overcome by the provider adding capacity to existing systems.

Q: HOW MUCH MONEY WILL I SAVE?

It is a common misconception that all Cloud-based solutions will yield a cost savings. While monthly fees may look insignificant on their own, when amortized over the life of a typical in-house server and the cost of software, some Cloud solutions may be less costly, while others cost significantly more. That is why it is important to carefully weigh the cost / benefit ratio before making the switch. Most businesses that make the move to Cloud-based services also seek agility and a means of minimizing third-party maintenance expenses. When viewed as a whole, more often than not, business managers find Cloud-based services to be a desirable option.

Q: I'M READY TO GET STARTED, HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO MIGRATE?

That depends entirely on what you wish to accomplish. There are no rules, only concepts, so working through the details is a critical first step. Technology is constantly in flux, and as such, you should be prepared for the possibility that some goals will be moving targets. Different organizations use different software solutions. Some may have cloud-based versions, whereas others may not. After researching your needs, we may find that a particular solution you rely upon is available in the Cloud, yet still in the nascent stages of development. In such cases, it is most often prudent to forego migrating until you are comfortable with the functionality of the Cloud version before moving forward.