



Microsoft Azure

Microsoft Azure /'æʒər/ (formerly Windows Azure before 25 March 2014) is a cloud computing platform and infrastructure, created by Microsoft, for building, deploying and managing applications and services through a global network of Microsoft-managed datacenters. It provides both PaaS and IaaS services and supports many different programming languages, tools and frameworks, including both Microsoft-specific and third-party software and systems. Azure was released on 1 February 2010.*

In general terms, using Azure small and mid-sized business can build virtual machines and networks, customize business applications and host many of their existing services in a Platform as a Service model.

*taken from Microsoft Azure Wikipedia page.

Affecting the SMB Market

Bottom line for businesses is often the bottom line. Infrastructure as a Service can save money on a number of fronts. Pay for what you need with scalable cloud provisions. More storage, more security and more of everything can be added at any time costing the business owner less in upfront costs and not wasting money on unused overhead. Still scalability is built in for when your business is ready for more users, bigger databases and line of business applications. Scalability and Reliability. Uptime guarantees are essential to cloud computing. What good is your data if you can't access it. Make sure any SLA guarantees its uptime.

Security and maintenance are also worth mentioning here. The idea is to make your business more efficient. More resources in the cloud mean less in your server closet. Consolidating services in the cloud means fewer physical machines that you have to secure. The same is true for maintenance. Fewer machines, fewer support calls, right? Maybe not so fast.

Peaches and Cream?

The "Cloud" is still in its infant stages and we must have some patience for perfection, but outages and growing pains can cost your business.

Last month and the month before incident reports from Microsoft acknowledge that a "subset of customers... may have encountered errors" or "... may have experienced unexpected restarts of their virtual machines." In a case reported by crn.com, an Azure customer experienced intermittent outages over the span of nine days. Glitches, updates and patches still need to be managed and can be costly to any business that may experience downtime.

Infrastructure as a Service or Platforms as a Service are here to stay and the technology is evolving rapidly, but Cloud Solutions are far from plug and play. Cloud Services are also a shift in the service model as more of your businesses infrastructure can and will be hosted remotely it can affect the relationship with your IT provider. A trusted IT Advisor should still be present and keeping their finger on the pulse of your business. Remote solutions can make you more efficient and save time and energy when managed and scaled properly.

New Address for our Headquarter's Offices. As of April 1st, Agility's HQ Address is;

**211 West Upper Wacker Drive
Suite #1600b
Chicago, IL 60606**

Any/All correspondence should be sent to the Wacker address. Thank you!

Questions, comments, feature requests? Call us at (877) AGILITY
Would you like to change your subscription? Email 'opt-out' to webmaster@agilitynetworks.com