

Rich Snippets

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And its Security Concerns

- Make sure your data is always travelling on a secure channel.
- Your data should always be encrypted and authenticated using industry standard protocols. Be aware of the software interfaces (or API's – Application Programming Interface) that are used to interact with cloud services.
- Learn how any cloud provider you might be considering integrates security throughout its service, from authentication and access control techniques to activity monitoring policies.
- Your data should be securely encrypted when it's on the provider's servers and while it's in use by the cloud service.
- Ask potential cloud providers how they secure your data not only when it's in transit but also when it's on their servers and accessed by the cloud-based applications. Find out, too, if the providers securely dispose of your data, for example, by deleting the encryption key.
- Data stored on a cloud provider's server can potentially be accessed by an employee of that company, and you have none of the usual personnel controls over those people. First, consider carefully the sensitivity of the data you're allowing out into the cloud. Second, ask providers for specifics about the people who manage your data and the level of access they have to it.
- Separation of Data. Every cloud-based service shares resources, namely space on the provider's servers and other parts of the provider's infrastructure. So, investigate the compartmentalization techniques, such as data encryption the provider uses to prevent access into your virtual container by other customers.

Cloud Computing...

In today's economy, "the cloud" continues to be a hot topic. Indeed, the benefits of cloud computing for small businesses are many. Increased flexibility (access information from anywhere), reduced costs in some instances (pay as you go subscription), and greater mobility (work from anywhere) make it a very enticing proposition for companies to "move to the cloud".

Both private and public clouds simply function the same way: Applications are hosted on a server and accessed over the internet. Whether you are using a Software as a Service (SaaS) version of a CRM (salesforce.com for example), creating offsite backups of your company data, or setting up a social media marketing page, you are trusting a third-party company with information about your business and, most likely, your customers!

So yes, there are some security risks that companies should address when considering moving critical applications and sensitive data to public and/or shared cloud environments. Listed to the right are just a few security items to keep in mind when considering moving to the cloud;

Although you should first address these security concerns with your Agility consultant before entrusting your data to a cloud service provider, they really shouldn't be a deal breaker. Cloud computing is offering small businesses too many benefits to completely dismiss the idea. After all, you already met many of these security challenges the first time you connected your network to the Internet :)

Happy Thanksgiving!!!

McDonald's® Thanksgiving Parade downtown Chicago - 11/27/2014

The McDonald's® Thanksgiving Parade, now in its 80th year, features Santa Claus, Ronald McDonald and a cast of thousands!

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This Thanksgiving, spend time relaxing out on the water aboard Odyssey Chicago! Celebrate with the entire family as you enjoy a special holiday meal featuring Thanksgiving favorites.

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Event takes place along the lakefront in Evanston beginning at Sheridan Road and Church Street and starts at 9 a.m.

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