

In this reading I will briefly introduce the Cloud9 development environment and explain my reasons for using it.

As you have gone through school you have probably seen or used tools like Microsoft Word or Google Docs, which are used for producing writing documents. These tools have various features which help support normal writing.

However, these tools are not built for writing and executing *code*. Writing code is very different from writing an essay or a novel and requires a completely different set of tools.

An application or system built for writing and executing code is called a **integrated development environment** or **IDE**. An IDE typically has many tools designed to support programmers in writing code.

The tool that we will be using for this class is called Cloud9 and is offered through Amazon Web Services or AWS.

Cloud9 is different than many applications in that it is *Cloud-Based* and so does not actually run on your computer. Instead, there is a server somewhere that is running your environment for you. You just have to connect to it.

This class has always been taught in a computer lab, with the development environment already set up for you. I am typically able to walk around and assist you and see where you are stuck. Going virtual has impacted that in a severe way, and requires some workarounds. Cloud9 is not a tool I have used to teach before, but I feel it is important to explore new possibly better suited options rather than to stay in one's comfort zone.

After researching my options, I felt that Cloud9 was the best option to use for this class for the following reasons:

- Anyone with access to the internet can access it at any time without needing to install anything. This is extremely important as all of you might have different types of computers.
- It is free (at least to the degree that we are using it)
- It has a built in UNIX based terminal (this is a tool you need to start getting comfortable with for your future classes and careers)
- It has a variety of features built in for collaboration, sharing, and chat support. I felt that this helps replicate the normal classroom environment.

It is important to note that when using Cloud9, you are not actually running it on your own computer. You are actually connected to a different computer over the internet. Any changes you make will not affect your computer and instead will stay on the computer Cloud9 is connected to. Each time you log in to Cloud9 you connect automatically to the same computer, even if you are connecting from a different one.

That being said, it seems one of the biggest pain points of using Cloud9 is that it takes several steps to set up and be ready for coding. These steps are not very difficult, but there are several of them.

It is therefore extremely important that you follow the steps in the readings in order to make this process as simple as possible. There is a validation process that can take up to a day or two, and so it is important that you start this process as soon as possible.

In the next reading we will discuss the first steps necessary to set up Cloud 9.