SERVERLESS 101
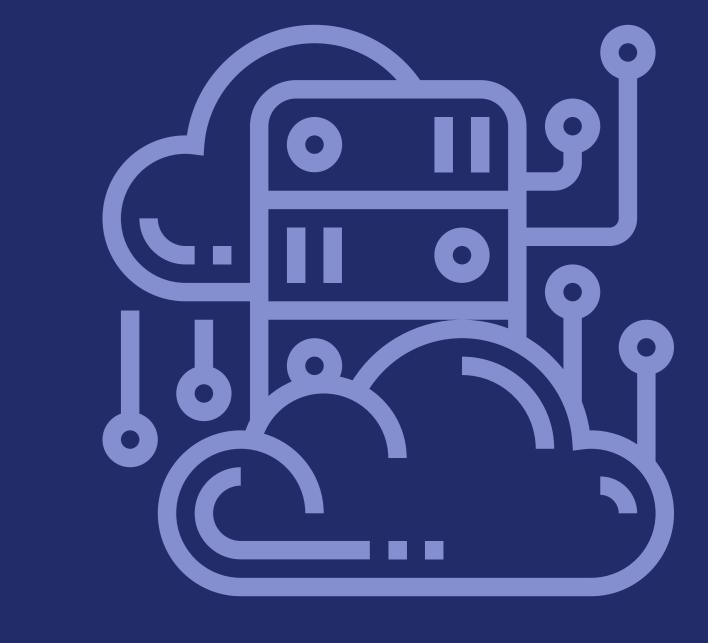
WHAT IS SERVERLESS?

a.k.a Function as a Service (FaaS)
It is a cloud service that abstracts the details of the cloud-based processor to the user or developer.

WHAT DOES A SERVERLESS WORKFLOW LOOK LIKE?

1 The developer (you) creates a function and defines an event that will trigger the execution.

2 The function is deployed to your cloud service (code + environment + vars).

3 An event triggers the serverless function (i.e. HTTP request, timer, database event).

4 Your cloud provider starts a new function and it is executed.

5 The result is sent to the client and / or to additional services.

DOES THIS MEAN SERVERS ARE NO LONGER USED?

They are- the difference is that your cloud provider (i.e. Azure) dynamically manages the assignment and distribution of resources. Instead of you or your colleague. Allowing you to focus more on the code and workflows than on the infrastructure.

WHAT IS THE COST MODEL?

Pricing changes from one cloud provider to another. But in general, t is pay-as-you-go which means you only pay for the actual consumption or computer up-time.

GOTCHAS

Serverless functions are stateless: resources inside the function will disappear once the function stops.

Faas are ephemereal and means they are short-lived (there is a timeout).

Cold starts - the execution of your FaaS can be slow if there is no function running already.

TANIA ALLARD