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Resumen: Cloud computing is a way of sharing information and programs between computers. The information and programs are stored on the Internet. People and businesses use cloud computing in many ways. They may use it to store their own information. They may also use it to try new computer programs. [ABSTRACT FROM AUTHOR]
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Cloud Computing

Cloud computing is a way of sharing information and programs between computers. The information and programs are stored on the Internet. People and businesses use cloud computing in many ways. They may

use it to store their own information. They may also use it to try new computer programs.

Background

The basic idea of cloud computing has been around for many years. In the 1950s and 1960s, people looked for ways to **network**, or connect, computers. Networking would help people share information and **programs** between computers. Programs allow a computer to do certain jobs.



: The "cloud" and computers. (© EBSCO)

In the 1970s and 1980s, networking was difficult. Sharing information between computers was slow. It also cost a lot of money.

In the 1990s, many people began using the **Internet**. The Internet was a fast and easy way to network computers. Now people could share information and programs quickly and cheaply.

Some companies formed **application service providers (ASPs)**. ASPs offer people a way of sharing or **renting** computer programs. People who rent something pay to use it for a short time. People did not have to buy their own programs. They could just use an ASP to rent shared programs.

In the 2000s, people used that idea to create cloud computing. They used the word "cloud" to mean the Internet. Many people thought of the Internet like a cloud that carried information around the world.

By 2008, cloud computing was becoming very popular. Millions of people around the world used it at home, at work, and in school.

Using Cloud Computing

Cloud computing can be used by **individuals** (single people) or companies. The way individuals and companies use cloud computing may differ.

Individual users usually use cloud computing to store information. Many people gather a large amount of information on their computers. This information may include music, photos, and files for school or work.

At first, individuals had to store this information on their **hard drive**. A hard drive is the part of a computer that holds information. Sometimes hard drives can break and lose information. Also, hard drives do not

easily share their information.

Many people want to share their information with friends and family. They may also want to **access**, or get to, their information using **mobile devices**. Mobile devices are small machines people carry with them. Cell phones and tablets are mobile devices.

These people may use cloud computing to store their information. They buy or rent cloud storage space on the Internet. Then they can access their information on any computer or other device that can go online.

Other times, individuals use cloud computing to try new programs. They pay to use the programs through the network for a certain amount of time.

Cloud computing is also important for businesses. For years, many businesses had difficulty with programs. Programs change often. They may cost a lot of money to buy. They may break down and need fixing. They may be hard to **install**, or set up.

Many of these companies have turned to cloud computing. These companies can buy or rent time to use a cloud network. On this network, workers can use all the newest programs. They can also use the cloud network to store and share their information.

Many people feel that cloud computing is great for companies. It can save companies a lot of money. Companies do not have to buy programs or hire people to install and fix them.

Cloud computing can also make work easier. It allows workers to use the best new programs over the Internet. It even allows companies to make their own programs inside the cloud network.

Staying Safe in the Cloud

Cloud computing can be very useful. However, it may have problems as well. Users may have problems with **security**, or safety. They may also have problems with **privacy**. Privacy means not being watched by others.

One problem is that large businesses run cloud computing. These businesses may shut down. They may have problems with their machines. This means users cannot use the cloud.

The businesses may also decide to charge more money. Cloud users will then have to pay more to get to their information.

Some people worry that other users may steal information in a cloud. The businesses that own cloud networks may even claim that they own all the information. There are not many laws to protect people from losing information.

People must be careful. They should only work with businesses they trust. They may also choose **private clouds** instead of **public clouds**. Private clouds cannot be used by other people. Public clouds are shared by many people. **Hybrid clouds** are another choice. They are a mix of private and public information.

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This article gives introductory information for users who are new to cloud computing.

Comprehension Test

Multiple-Choice Questions

1. When did many people start using the Internet?

- A. in the 1950s
- B. in the 1960s
- C. in the 1970s
- D. in the 1990s

2. Which of these is a part of a computer?

- A. a hard drive
- B. a public cloud
- C. a private cloud
- D. a mobile device

3. What is one problem with cloud computing?

- A. It is hard to set up.
- B. It costs a lot of money.
- C. It is not always safe.
- D. It does not work fast.

Fill-in-the-Blank Questions

- 4. _____ means paying to use something for a short time.
- 5. Clouds that mix public and private information are called _____ clouds.
- 6. People want _____, or safety, when using cloud computing.

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By Mark Dziak

Mark Dziak is a writer of fiction and nonfiction who has produced educational testing and reference materials since 2004.

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