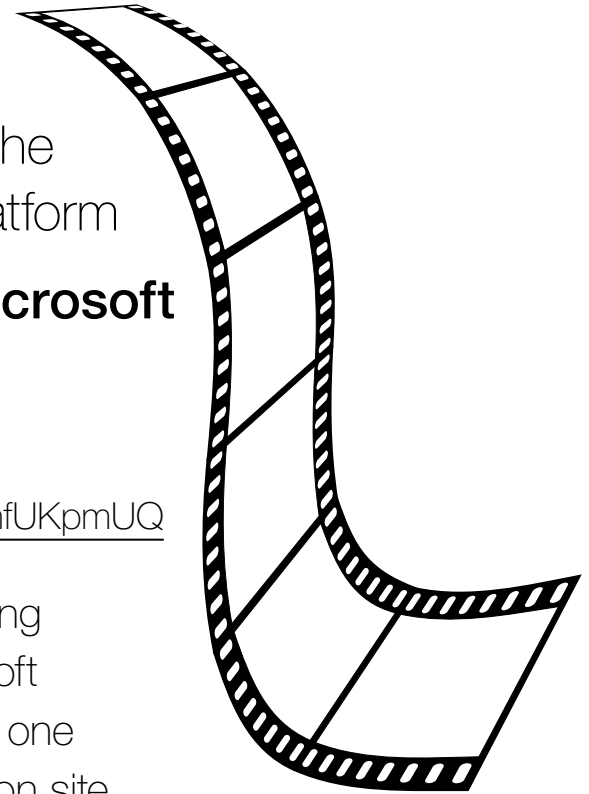# ▶ video case

chapter 3   E-commerce Infrastructure: The Internet, Web, and Mobile Platform

case 3.2   **Compare.com Turns to Microsoft Azure and the Cloud**

watch the video at   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WauhfUKpmUQ

summary   More and more companies are turning to public cloud providers like Microsoft for their computing needs. See how one such company, insurance comparison site Compare.com, got results from switching to Microsoft Azure. L: 2:35

case   Many of the largest tech firms, including Google, Apple, Amazon, and Microsoft, have spent hundreds of millions of dollars to improve their information technology infrastructure. Now, these companies offer computing power to businesses of all shapes and sizes, from other Fortune 500 companies to small businesses looking to harness a small portion of the computing power of these tech giants.

Companies offering processing, storage, networking, and other computing resources to individual businesses or customers are said to offer 'infrastructure as a service' (IaaS), following in the footsteps of other models, such as software as a service (SaaS). Foremost among these companies is Amazon. Amazon Web Services (AWS) offers a variety of services that span all

major functions of a business. Amazon's Elastic Compute Cloud (EC2) is the most popular feature of AWS. EC2 allows businesses to purchase exactly the amount of computing power that they need from Amazon. AWS's Simple Storage Service allows businesses to store data using Amazon's always-on network of data storage servers. Amazon also offers many analytical tools and services that perform simple business tasks, such as e-mail and database services. Microsoft Azure, featured in the video, is another widely used platform, with an array of similar capabilities for businesses.

For a smaller company, using the tech giants' existing infrastructure and built-in business services is much easier than developing their own internal systems from scratch. More and more businesses are turning to Amazon, Microsoft, and its peers in the public cloud computing marketplace, cutting costs and improving scalability in the process. AWS is the dominant player in this area. It isn't just small companies, either—Netflix relies heavily on AWS, as do other large organizations like Nike, Pfizer, and Airbnb. Microsoft Azure is in a commanding second place position. Prominent organizations using Azure include Pearson, Ford, and NBC News.

Microsoft and Amazon have been competing fiercely to lower their prices. Microsoft Azure may be a better option for companies with significant investment in other Microsoft technology and services, whereas Amazon may better suit companies willing to take extra time and effort to create a setup that exactly corresponds to their computing needs. For most companies, both cloud providers are good choices, and in each case companies can look forward to having an experienced partner as they move to the cloud.

Since its launch in 2010, Microsoft Azure has grown rapidly, generating over $1 billion in revenue as early as 2014. Azure's services fall in three classes—infrastructure services, platform services, and software as a service. Azure's infrastructure services include virtualization capability for both Windows and Linux operating systems as well as cloud data storage via Microsoft Azure StorSimple. Customers pay only for the computing power they need. Azure's platform services allow users to develop and distribute apps for Android, iOS, and Windows that use the cloud. Lastly, Azure offers software as a service in several ways. Azure powers all of Microsoft's Office 365 applications, which are cloud-based versions of Microsoft's flagship Office series of programs. Azure also allows customers to run Windows Intune management software and Dynamics CRM software, among many other options.

In this video, you'll learn more about the experiences of Compare.com, an insurance comparison website, as it switched from a physical infrastructure to a cloud-based computing infrastructure using Microsoft Azure.

video case questions

1. Why is Compare.com's Web site critical to their business? How does Compare.com work?

2. How much did Compare.com save on its infrastructure costs after switching to Azure?

3. How did Microsoft help Compare.com ease into their transition to Azure?