

uses a small private cloud that provides local access to the some of the applications and the public cloud for others. You might maintain your most frequently used data on a private cloud for fast access via the local network and use the public cloud to store archives and other less frequently used data, for which performance isn't as much of an issue.

Introducing Some of the Major Cloud Providers

Hundreds, if not thousands, of companies provide cloud services. Most of the cloud computing done today, however, is provided by just a few providers, which are described in the following sections.

Amazon

By far the largest provider of cloud services in the world is Amazon. Amazon launched its cloud platform — Amazon Web Services (AWS) — in 2006. Since then, hundreds of thousands of customers have signed up. Some of the most notable users of AWS include Netflix, Pinterest, and Instagram.

AWS includes the following features:

- » **Amazon CloudFront:** A PaaS content-delivery system designed to deliver web content to large numbers of users.
- » **Amazon Elastic Compute Cloud:** Also called Amazon EC2. An IaaS system that provides access to raw computing power.
- » **Amazon Simple Storage Service:** Also called Amazon S3. Provides web-based data storage for unlimited amounts of data.
- » **Amazon Simple Queue Service:** Also called Amazon SQS. Provides a data transfer system that lets applications send messages to other applications. SQS enables you to build applications that work together.
- » **Amazon Virtual Private Cloud:** Also called Amazon VPC. Uses virtual private network (VPN) connections to connect your local network to Amazon's cloud services.