5 Reasons to Move Your Line-of-Business Applications to the Cloud

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As the Federal government continues to make progress toward the goal of digitizing governmental operations in an effort to reduce costs, ensure timely service delivery, and modernize record-keeping, federal agencies are migrating functionality and line-of-business applications to the cloud.

The cloud has now been around for a number of years and as the private sector has steadily improved the variety, reliability, and security of cloud-based apps and services, it has become an attractive alternative to the traditional on-premises IT infrastructure.

For government entities, the cloud presents some attractive benefits that can enable agencies to better fulfill their mandates and missions. Let's take a look at five major reasons why you should move your organization's line-of-business applications to a cloud-based IT infrastructure:

1. Proven security

The Federal Risk and Authorization management program (FedRAMP) is a government-wide program providing a standardized approach to security assessment, authorization, and continuous monitoring for cloud products and services. For federal agencies using a FedRAMP-certified cloud services provider CSP), this not only provides a proven risk-based management methodology to ensure secure records and processes, it can save agencies migrating to the cloud significant time, money, and resources.

2. Cost

By migrating to the cloud, IT costs become an operating expense, not a capital expense – your agency no longer needs to purchase and maintain expensive servers and other hardware required for a premises-based datacenter. An attractive total-cost-of-ownership scenario makes a compelling case for cloud migration, especially if you look out over time and factor in the considerable CAPEX cost of on-premises infrastructure upgrades.

3. Scalability and flexibility

Nothing beats the versatility of the cloud. Computing power, bandwidth, and storage space can be increased and decreased almost instantly. This is especially valuable for departments and agencies such as the Census Bureau or IRS which can experience periodic fluctuations in service delivery needs, requiring them to scale rapidly to meet changing demand.

4. Reliability

As many large private enterprises have discovered, the cloud can provide unparalleled, "five nines" reliability – the ability to stay up and running 99.999% of the time. A major concern associated with premises-based IT infrastructures is the large number of potential failure points they present. On-premises infrastructures often comprise a rack of servers with a single power source and cooling unit – an uncomfortably exposed opportunity for failure.

On the other hand, a large CSP will have multiple, redundant systems with lots of power back-up as well as datacenter and computing headroom that enables them to rapidly transfer storage and services from one coast to the other with no noticeable blip in system performance. Service continuity is extremely important for federal agencies, and the kind of redundancy available through many of the larger, more sophisticated CSPs provides the reliability and peace-of-mind government agencies need.

5. Automatic upgrades

In the cloud, infrastructure maintenance and app upgrades become the responsibility of the service provider, ensuring that all applications are current and optimized. With operating systems and mission-critical applications automatically upgraded, agency personnel can focus on the mission and not be forced to commit time and resources to software maintenance and upgrading.

As government agencies continue the task of digitizing and transforming their operations, a critical part of that transformation will be the modernization of their IT ecosystems. Migrating from a legacy, premises-based IT system to a nimble, versatile, cloud-based infrastructure will help significantly improve service to clients and constituents.