**Revised category intro’s**

**Need to know more about conferencing?**

Meetings are simply unavoidable and part of everyday life. Thankfully, instead of spending endless hours on the road or travelling by train or plane there is now an easier and faster way to connect to customers, colleagues and suppliers. Using your PC, laptop, tablet or smartphone you can simply schedule a web conference.

Think of it as digital ‘teleportation’ where you can set-up or join a meeting instantly and invite participants out of thin air to answer specific questions or queries. Also the ability to share documents and work together on one screen is fantastic compared to a somewhat crowded and huddled affair in the real world. Some providers even use high-definition audio and video which is why we still recommend flossing!

Now at Compare Cloudware, we’re not suggesting you replace all physical meetings with virtual sessions but is does mean you can prioritise the appointments that should be done face-to-face and with a firm handshake.

**Need to know more about email?**

Email is one of life’s little treasures isn’t it? In fact with all the spam, junk mail, holiday competitions, cash prizes and coupons, finding the email message you want can sometimes feel like searching for hidden Aztec gold. So ask yourself the question, when was the last time you reviewed your email set-up? Go on admit it, it was probably when the X-Files was still on primetime.

Now whisper it quietly but email has lived in the Cloud for quite a while and our guess is that you’re already using it with at least one account somewhere in your digital life; whether at home or out and about on your smartphone.

Well, like everything in the Cloud, you don’t need a dedicated box of electronics to run anything and migrating to another provider with your existing email address is simple and straightforward. Even better you can archive all your email in the Cloud for instant back-up and disaster recovery. And for those of you that are still promoting your Internet Service Provider (ISP) brand in your email address? Shame on you, you’re missing the biggest marketing opportunity since the printing press!

**Need to know more about storage & back-up?**

EXISTING TEXT FINE

**Need to know more about phone services?**

The humble phone, great isn’t it? When all else fails at least you can pick-up the phone and talk to somebody. The reality is that one standard phone line only goes so far, well in fact one conversation at a time! How many calls are you missing from prospective customers or worse can existing customers get through to you? In the past, the answer was to get an expensive phone system and multiple phone lines.

Now with Cloud based phone systems you can have a number of lines with a single broadband connection with the ability to add smart functionality such as who answers the phone, automatic call routing, out-of-hours messaging, call forwarding, music-on-hold and separate direct dial extensions. Some providers even offer sophisticated call centre functionality with the ability to record calls.

In most cases you keep your existing number and buy additional extensions as you need them even for staff located in different offices or at home. You won’t need to buy any phone equipment, it’s literally another application available on-demand from the Cloud.

**Need to know more about office apps?**

Do you buy expensive pre-loaded software because it’s less hassle than downloading or using CDs? We have all been guilty of that particular offence but now it’s no longer a sin that needs committing.

Like all cloud services, office applications and services are delivered on-demand, cheaper than their downloaded counterparts and using the latest version (so no more expensive upgrades!) With most office applications you can even work offline. Even better is the ability for members of a team to work on the same document in real time and retrieve files they need directly from the Cloud rather than somebody’s hard drive.

Forget about USB storage keys and emailing large documents, all you need is a username and a password to access your documents from anywhere. In addition to the standard fare of office suites, there is an abundance of specialist applications that enable office features on your smartphone, publish directly to a website, integrate with social media or even develop slick presentations with video. So unless you’re downloading yet another office software update or security patch, what are you waiting for?

**Need to know more about financial apps?**

Are you still using spreadsheets to track your spending and payments? Are you still manually cross-referencing bank statements? Or worse, creating customer invoices using a word processor? Keeping track of the pennies is tough enough without creating more mess to try and keep on top of it all.

Whether you work from home, run a shop or look after a medium sized business, there is a cloudware service for you that makes finance and accounts a picnic rather than a dog’s dinner! So whether it is recording bank payments, looking at cashflow, creating invoices, running a payroll or helping with the tax return, you’ll find something tailored to your needs in this category.

The good news is that if it does all get too much you can give access to your accountant to help tidy things up, now try and do that with a spreadsheet!

**Need to know more about customer management?**

What is your most important business asset? Well aside from that top of the range coffee machine that makes dreamy cappuccino, it should be your customer (even if you happen to be Costa Coffee!). The cold hard truth, however, is that customers are often neglected instead of being cherished and nurtured like an eggnog latte at Christmas.

The reality is that if you’re out and about, have more than a handful of clients and a few staff that need to share customer information, you need something better than scraps of paper, post-it notes, email and office software. With Cloud based customer relationship management (known in the IT trade as CRM), you can keep in touch with customers or prospective customers at a touch of a button.

Most services are easy to set-up and even work with cloud based email and phone systems. You can even integrate enquiry forms on your website to generate new business or help existing customers whilst using your smartphone to keep on top of what’s happening. Before you know it, you’ll be running customer campaigns, running a virtual helpdesk and forecasting sales like the big boys but at a tiny fraction of the cost!

**Need to know more about project management tools?**

Most of us try our upmost to manage our lives with a dose of common sense, perhaps the occasional ‘to do’ list and maybe even mark a calendar with a special event. For the most part that’s OK but sometimes we need a little extra help and that’s what this category is all about. Here’s how to become a project management whizz!

Successful project management is about keeping track of all the important (and seemingly unimportant things) in our more complex endeavours. Making sure certain tasks don’t fall between the cracks will help prevent wasted time, increased costs and rising blood pressure. So whether you’re building an extension, developing an app, keeping tabs on an important assignment or even doing a work project outside your normal comfort zone, we suggest ditching the self-made ‘to do’ list and get something that can really help ease the burden.

Now of course you may be able to afford hiring a professional project manager or, better still, actually be one. So if you‘re already a skilled schemer you may find something new here that can help you keep on top of your game

**Need to know more about security services?**

Going into overdrive with our ‘digital life’ is great – whether it’s at work or at home. But the risk to those files, records, photos, designs and recordings is immense. So many treasured and valued documents - many are irreplaceable and others are just plain valuable! With all today’s threats, what actions do you take to keep yourself safe?

What should you do to protect all your devices and content – from tablet to phone, from email to database? Protection from scammers, hackers, identity thieves, and chancers could seem like a full time occupation – especially in today’s get-rich-quick culture. So, how do you make sure you don’t ‘star’ in The Hustle – or just lose all your data thanks to a good old-fashioned virus?

The answer could be one solution. The answer could be a few. Whichever one it is, it’ll be on Compare Cloudware – and it’s waiting for you to discover it. Simply enter your requirements to get ‘digital lock-down’. You’ll get the peace of mind that you’re doing everything you should to protect and defend your stuff.