

CLOUD STORAGE **COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS**

Executive Summary

Over the last several years it is becoming increasingly expensive to run a modern office or educational environment. Capital expenses and operating costs are growing exponentially with the advent of the always-on workplace and persistent school connectivity. As organizations try to scale up while staying on budget and remaining profitable, they are running into several growing pains. These challenges include data management, IT maintenance, and network availability among others. As a result, organizations are now moving to cloud computing as a reliable file storage solution.

Popular cloud-based data storage services such as Dropbox, Google Drive, or Microsoft OneDrive, all possess the same basic functionality. They allow users to save files to their personal clouds and retrieve them whenever and wherever they want. This appears convenient and ideal for students and a more mobile workforce, but this does raise concerns over privacy and security when dealing with multi-user or public access computers. Therefore, a third-party file management solution equipped to handle these issues is necessary in order to best utilize any cloud storage service. For example, with Faronics Cloud Sync, once a file is synced up, the local files are deleted, saving precious local hard drive space and preventing any risk of data theft on the computer.

This white paper will explore the financial and user benefits as well as the risks and solutions to implementing a cloud storage service.

Economic Advantages of Moving to Cloud Storage

Switching to a cloud-based storage solution can result in significant savings. In a study by MindSHIFT, a cloud services provider, 56% of companies surveyed, reported an average of \$75,000 saved annually when they moved operations to a cloud environment. The potential return on investment for businesses or schools moving to a cloud storage service can be huge.

There are several economic benefits/ advantages that should be considered when determining the value of cloud storage.

■ No Expensive Hardware

The cost of purchasing on-premise file servers and network drives is expensive. The hardware takes up lots of real estate and can cost thousands of dollars upfront. Depending on the size of an organization, it might not be possible to justify the expense, especially in cash-strapped school districts. This is why IT managers have turned to cloud storage to reduce this costly burden. With cloud-based storage systems, you only pay for the amount of storage you need. This pricing flexibility prevents wasted infrastructure.

■ Lower IT Spending

Maintaining network file servers is a full time job. For any organization, it is an unavoidable necessity in order to provide reliable service to all users. In terms of labor costs, there is only so much that can be automated regarding daily monitoring and maintenance. Countless hours are still spent watching for alerts and troubleshooting problems. By investing in a cloud-based storage solution, organizations are reducing their reliance on IT administrative services.

■ Reduced Energy Costs

As any IT administrator can attest, server rooms are not usually the most luxurious of places. They are either uncomfortably warm due to poor air circulation and ventilation, or fairly chilly caused by the air conditioning system on full blast. In both of these cases, network file servers consume a lot of energy. A significant portion of an organization's energy bill stems from server power consumption. Getting rid of a network file server and moving to a cloud-based storage system will not only save you money, it is also good for the environment.

Potential Issues

Despite the myriad of financial benefits that moving to a cloud-based storage service can provide, these advantages do come at a cost.

One of the biggest concerns when moving to cloud storage is the need of an internet connection in order to access files. However, this issue can be easily mitigated by implementing offline policies and automating syncing to ensure file availability at all times.

Service outages, while unlikely, can have an impact on your operations if it were to occur. What is more likely to affect a user is low bandwidth due to a slow internet connection.

Depending on the size of the files a user is working with and the speed of their connection, they might have to wait a little bit longer to save and retrieve files.



Benefits of a Cloud-Based Workplace

Scalability

An organization can go through a lot of changes over time. Workloads fluctuate, employees and students come and go, but no matter the demand, a cloud-based storage system can be made to fit any organization size. This ensure that IT administrators are not scrambling to provide room to a new user, or wasting empty space on an idle server. Cloud storage infrastructure can easily grow with an environment.

Redundancy

Creating backups of user files and critical data has become a common task for any IT administrator. Cloud storage services has made it easy to add an automated offsite backup to any workflow. In the event of a system failure, restoring a system and retrieving up-to-date backup files from the cloud has never been easier.

Mobility

Cloud access to important files gives users the freedom and flexibility to work from anywhere. Leveraging cloud storage solutions as part of a mobile workforce improves productivity by allowing users to work more efficiently with their files. Whether it is on their laptop or smartphone, cloud-based storage solutions improves overall accessibility in the workplace.

Besides the inherent cost savings, switching to a cloud-based storage solution can result in many workplace improvements such as increased file server availability, user mobility, and improved system redundancy. According to a report by OpsRamp, a cloud IT management provider, 62% of IT executives surveyed stated that the top reasons for migrating to cloud services were a desire for greater flexibility and scalability. These benefits will have lasting impact on not just the bottom line, but also overall workplace productivity.

How to Set Up an Efficient Cloud Storage System

The first thing you need to do is perform an audit on your current network storage. By discovering the total costs, benefits and issues associated with your current setup, this will establish a baseline in order to better measure your move to a cloud storage system. Once direct costs like maintenance and indirect costs like revenue and productivity lost due to server downtime is determined, you can now start evaluating different cloud-based storage options.

After choosing your preferred cloud storage provider, establishing a proper workflow will help your users efficiently take advantage of the new system. Using an endpoint data management system can help make the transition easier by automating different requirements like file syncing and backups. In the event the computer is protected by Faronics Deep Freeze, Cloud Sync ensures that files will survive a restart until they are successfully uploaded to your preferred cloud drive. Additionally, once a file has been synced, the file on the user's machine is deleted, saving precious local hard drive space and preventing any possible data theft

Faronics Cloud Sync, makes it easier for users to access their files without the need of Deep Freeze ThawSpaces or creating Thawed partitions. It leverages Dropbox, Google Drive, or OneDrive by automatically syncing files from default Windows File Explorer folders such as Desktop, Document, or Downloads. Since files are tied to individual cloud storage accounts, this prevents multiple users using the same computer from accessing each other's files.

Contact Faronics to learn more about Cloud Sync and how it can help your manage your cloud storage solution.



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Faronics' solutions help organizations increase the productivity of existing IT investments and lower IT operating costs. Incorporated in 1996, Faronics has offices in the USA, Canada, and the UK, as well as a global network of channel partners. Our solutions are deployed in over 150 countries worldwide, and are helping more than 30,000 customers.

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