

## Financial Times - Digital Business

### Don't cloud your vision

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<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/303680a6-bf51-11dd-ae63-0000779fd18c.html>

The cloud is the enhancement of the internet through the addition of specialised resources from raw computing power to Web 2.0 applications that users can link to remotely. It offers the scope to harness a hundredfold increase in computing power both more cheaply and more effectively.

The Jericho Forum has already seen examples of how easy it is to do this – no big project plan, no procurement of equipment, no lengthy budget hold-ups and sign-offs. Just a couple of hundred bucks to put through on an expenses claim and you have bought instant results and saved money.

Many business operations can come from the cloud. But how safe and effective is it?

Counter-intuitively, the cloud approach to organising business can be both more secure and more efficient than the old style silo structure.

Given that enterprises simply have to collaborate today, the best approach to getting various collaboration tools to interact seems to be cloud collaboration services. These can be designed to be more effective and more secure than the connections between silo-based collaboration solutions.

Each business needs to deploy the right hybrid version of cloud computing to suit its needs.

At the heart of all forms of cloud models is the concept of “abstraction”. Cloud models separate one layer of business from another, for example process from software, or platform from infrastructure. The more successfully you can separate the layers in your model, the better your cloud implementation will be.

Early cloud successes occurred in telecoms – which spawned the original use of the term “cloud” – where physical leased lines were successfully separated from the higher logical transport layer. Now the cloud concept covers all examples of abstraction in the IT space. Abstraction, done correctly, ensures that capacity issues or failures in one layer have no impact on the layers above. What is essential is that the right capabilities and services are in place to secure all the different elements when they are abstracted out to hybrid solutions.

The joy of the cloud model is it delivers ultimate flexibility. If a cloud vendor, for example, were to go under, you should be able to move effortlessly to another provider or use your cloud-based capability to provide you with seamless disaster recovery.

At Jericho Forum we are actively encouraging solution providers and vendors to develop the missing capabilities and services to help users avoid the stormier implications of clouds. Indeed, we've focused on developing a practical blueprint geared to showing organisations how to create the right architecture for secure business collaboration.

Our “Collaboration Oriented Architectures” framework lays out a set of design principles allowing businesses to protect themselves against the security challenges posed by increased

collaboration and addresses the business potential offered by Web 2.0. We've set out to develop a clear scheme based on real live case studies that allows firms to build for secure transactions in a world where the borders between the organisation and the outside world have crumbled. The next stage is to extend this to the cloud.

So do clouds have golden linings? Yes, if you help them grow and develop the right way and follow a well-structured path to collaboration. But beware: the storm clouds will gather very quickly if you don't.

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