

The Challenge – How do we store all that information and still provide clients with unlimited access?

For years business has been faced with the issue of storing significant amounts of information for their clients in an affordable manner while still allowing secure access to information from anywhere at any time. Many years ago, we began to hear more and more of about this concept called “Cloud” computing. Most people have heard the term but may not understand exactly what it is and why it is so important to the future of how we think of storing and accessing information, both for business and personal use.

What is the Cloud?

Simply put, the cloud is just another place to store your data. Instead of on a local desk top computer, now more than ever companies (over 50%) are storing data on “the cloud” using internet accessible computers. Same data, just parking it in a different place. The big advantage is that unlike a local computer, where you have to be physically sitting at the computer to access your data, you can now safely and securely access your programs and data from anywhere you have internet access. Using the cloud, you can access your data at home, at work, on an airplane, on vacation, or even at your favorite coffee house. It also means you don't have to buy multiple, expensive computers and software and place them wherever you might need to access your information. Profit Street will be using this methodology and have also set it up to allow you to use mobile devices including smart phones and tablets.



How does the Cloud work and is it Safe?

According to Explainthatstuff.com, “Cloud computing means that instead of all the computer hardware and software you're using sitting on your desktop, or somewhere inside your company's network, it's provided for you as a service by another company and accessed over the Internet, usually in a completely seamless way. Exactly where the hardware and software is located and how it all works doesn't matter to you, the user—it's just somewhere up in the nebulous "cloud" that the Internet represents.”

The Cloud can mean different things to different people. Perhaps the easiest is to just look at some real life examples that you encounter every day.

Most people have been safely using the Cloud for years and may not have realized it. If you have ever texted, used Facebook, stored pictures, sent emails, have a smart phone, played games on the internet or used Twitter, you have probably been using the Cloud. When you sit at your PC and type a query into

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Google, the computer on your desk really isn't doing much, the query is being performed in the Cloud by thousands of computers that could be located anywhere in the world and most likely it doesn't matter as long as you get the result you are looking for. A survey by Citrix noted that "95% of the people who thought they were not using the cloud, actually were."

You may have read news articles or seen television broadcasts about how some company lost credit card or other personal information online. While this has caused many people to become concerned about the security of the Cloud, the reality is the Cloud is one of the safest environments a company can use for data storage and access, if it is set up correctly. Here is why you won't have to worry about placing your information on Profit Street's cloud based network.

According to Forbes; "Most cloud computing companies are like experienced airline pilots. They are well trained, have backup systems and contingency plans in case they encounter an issue, and they have a full staff of professionals regularly checking and maintaining their service. Cloud software companies, knowing the implications of a crash on their business' bottom line, invest significant resources into insuring that such a situation never occurs. Cloud computing companies can invest far more resources in data backup and security than you or your business can."

Properly set-up cloud based networks, like Profit Street's website, have a unique registered ID, just like a driver's license. For the techies in the group, this is referred to as an SSL (Secure Socket Layer). These IDs are actually harder to obtain than a driver's license and the applying company must undergo a verification and security process. Once the certificate is issued to the website it can be used to encrypt all traffic to and from the site. This creates a secure path for communication similar to the way large sums of money are transported from a business to a bank. Just like when an armored truck arrives at a business for a pick-up, an ID must be presented by the guard to obtain access. After the ID is verified, the guard takes the money in a locked bag and places it into the truck, never seeing the contents of the bag. The truck then drives to the bank where it is unloaded and the contents are delivered to the bank. The bank IDs the locked bag of money using their account information. Then the money is deposited into the appropriate account, just as your data will be safely deposited in your Profit Street account.

Another added layer of security in the cloud addresses the people that handle payment processing. As a protection for consumers, the government has created a process requirement for companies accepting payments called PCI (Payment Card Industry) compliance. It is required by all credit card brands and is a set of specific security standards that were developed to protect card information during and after all financial transactions. This compliance process takes months of review and typically costs participating companies a considerable fee to complete. This process is built into the Profit Street system via our payment processing company, achieving cost efficiencies along with added safety for our clients.

How does the Cloud Benefit me?

So what's in for you? Actually, there are a considerable number of advantages to you.

- **Reduced cost to you for the Profit Street application** – unlike on-site placement on local computers, the price of deploying applications in the cloud can be far less due to lower hardware costs from more effective use of physical resources.
- **Up to date software** – You don't have to worry about going through time consuming upgrades. Being in the cloud enables you to always be working on the latest release automatically.

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- **Potential to be greener and more economical** – Often overlooked is the environmental affect the Cloud has. The average amount of energy needed for a computational action carried out in the cloud is far less than the average amount for an on-site action.
- **Universal Worldwide Access.** Cloud computing increases mobility, as you can access your documents from any device in any part of the world at any time. For businesses, this means that you and your employees can work from home or on business trips, without having to carry around documents. This increases productivity and allows faster exchange of information. You can also access information on your mobile devices.
- **More Storage.** In the past, memory and data space was limited by the particular device in question. If you ran out of memory, you would need a USB drive to back-up your current device. Cloud computing automatically provides increased storage, so you won't have to worry about running out of space on your hard drive.
- **Automated Back-ups.** If you have a local computer you must make sure you are backing it up on a daily basis or pay for a service to do that for you. Cloud computing services provide an automated back-up for you so you do not need to have the expense or time involved with this exercise.
- **Easy Set-Up.** Cloud computing services can be set up very quickly, since many of the options are already managed for you and there is no need for physically loading software onto your local computer

Summary

Profit Street will always endeavor to provide the best product and service for its clients. This includes using the best technology available now and in the future. The Cloud is the future of business; in fact 2014 is the first year the majority of information workloads will reside on the cloud, as 51% is projected to be processed in the cloud versus 49% in the traditional IT space (Silicon Angle). The Cloud provides Profit Street with the most beneficial deployment to our clients, while at the same time making it as easy as possible for them to access and use. This coupled with the low cost of Cloud computing allows us to provide an essential product and service for our clients at a low monthly fee.