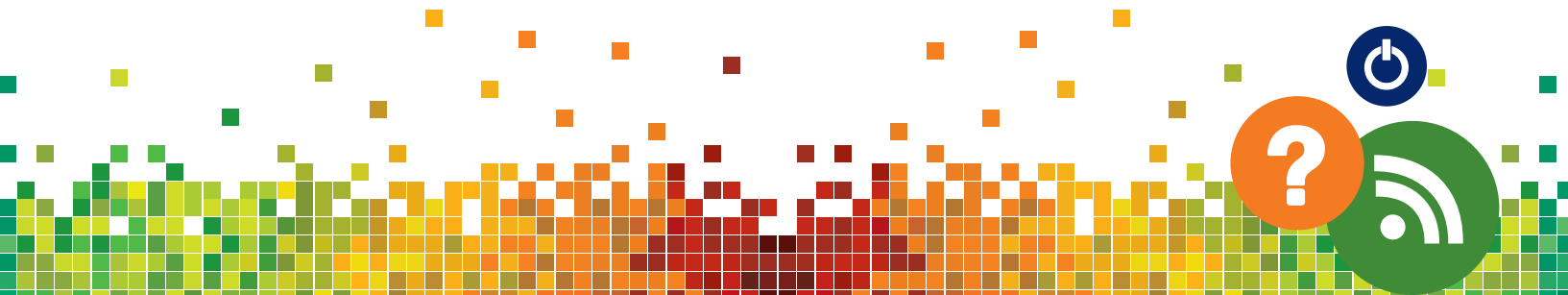


The Little Guide to Cloud Computing



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What is cloud computing?

Cloud computing refers to any work done on a computer where the data and possibly the application you are using do not reside on your computer but rather on an unspecified device elsewhere on the Internet. When only the data is located elsewhere work on your computer proceeds in the usual manner with the exception of the reading and writing of data. When both the data and application are located elsewhere your computer serves only as an interface to the application; usually the interface will be written such that an ordinary browser such as Firefox, Explorer or Safari is all that is needed on the user's computer.

Why is it useful?

In the cloud computing model data becomes accessible from anywhere on the Internet. As a result work becomes computer-independent: you can be anywhere in the world and as long as you have a machine which connects to the Internet you can access your work.

The cloud model facilitates collaborative work. Any number of people can have identical access to an application and a set of data. Furthermore, the size of one's computer ceases to be an issue: a computationally intensive program can be run on a powerful machine somewhere and all a user needs to control it is a computer that can run a web browser.

Other terms for cloud computing that you may encounter include online applications, web applications, webware and thin client applications.

How is It used?

Probably the simplest and most widely-used cloud application is webmail (e.g. Hotmail, Gmail, broadband providers). Other common uses for the cloud model include web-based file storage systems such as DropBox and Moby, collaborative environments such as Google Docs and bookmarking facilities like Delicious. Large-scale storage environments are also available for enterprise and other purposes (e.g. Microsoft Azure, Amazon Web Services (AWS)).

Digital Media and Cloud Computing

There are many cloud applications currently available for the creation and manipulation of digital media. These include image editors such as FotoFlexer and Pixlr, audio editors such as Myna and Soundation Studio, screencasting tools such as Screencast-o-Matic and Screenr and video editors such as Movie Masher and Jayout.

