

## Cloud Computing: Get on Board

Cloud computing services have become a vital part of communication, collaboration, and the acceleration of producing documents. If you've used a computer in the last decade, you've used "the cloud". Before this beautiful thing became a "thing," computers were the source of immeasurable frustration. This is because computers were originally set up like an old fashion strand of Christmas lights. Operating systems, applications, and hardware were all built on top of one another, so when one failed, the whole system went down. Cloud computing systems made this inevitable domino-effecting-meltdown a thing of the past because cloud systems separate and disperse these connections to any number of servers in any number of places.

Cloud services allow you, and anyone you afford access, to contribute to a document simultaneously from any computer with an Internet connection. For example, you and three others have a presentation to construct, but time and space don't allow you to physically meet. You can create a folder within Google Drive and invite your comrades. The cloud service permits you each to work from your own computers because the document is in an application that doesn't actually exist in your server, it exists in one or multiple communal servers that can be accessed from anywhere in the world. The server being used is part of a "cluster" of servers which prevents overload of users and data because when someone tries to access the document within the application within a server that has reached or neared capacity, the user is directed to the same document in the same application via a different server. Because there is no limit to contribution or access, cloud services make constructive work easier than ever. Basically, if you're about production, you're about "the cloud."

iCloud is Apple's cloud system that they developed to accommodate their vast line of products. This why an iPhone user can download a song on his or her cell phone and find it in their computer's music library without connecting the two physically. iCloud is great for syncing data to all of your devices automatically but that's only if your devices are all made by Apple.

Egnyte is another highly touted cloud service that allows you to upload files of any size and store them locally on a device without losing the cloud accessibility – however, it lacks the ability to stream media.

Google Apps separates your content into its respective categories – which can be both convenient and hindering depending on the need – such as: Docs (for word docs, presentations, etc.), Picasa (for photos), and the most popular, Gmail (email).