



CLOUD OR MANAGED CLOUD: MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR YOUR BUSINESS

January, 2016

By **Amy Eager**

Technical Solution Architect, IFS North America

HIGHLIGHTS

P1

The cloud offers great benefits, but still takes time and resources to manage. Choosing a managed cloud frees up your team members to concentrate on tasks that can truly help grow your business.

P3

The IFS Managed Cloud™ is built on Microsoft Azure, one of the strongest cloud offerings available. The Azure cloud is global, highly secure and is one of the easiest clouds to get up and running.

P4

Choosing the managed cloud gives you one team to go to for all your application and cloud needs. If problems arise, that team is often able to fix them before they impact your business—usually before you're aware that the problem even exists.

CONTENT

SCALABILITY AND FLEXIBILITY	1
SINGLE-TENANT VS. MULTI-TENANT.....	3
THE STRENGTH AND REACH OF THE MICROSOFT AZURE CLOUD.....	3
THE BENEFITS OF BEING ON THE SAME TEAM.....	4
SUMMARY.....	5
ABOUT IFS	6



CLOUD OR MANAGED CLOUD: MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR YOUR BUSINESS

We've been hearing about the benefits of the cloud for years. Moving to the cloud means an end to the need for costly internal data centers filled with servers, networks, storage and a team of people to install and run things. Once your business is on the cloud, it's pretty much log in and go. The need to invest in and maintain expensive equipment and additional staff is almost eliminated.

But there's the key word—almost. The cloud offers huge benefits, but the idea that you can just plug in and go from there is a bit of an illusion. You still need human resources dedicated to managing your databases, applying patches, spinning up new environments, and more. If something in your cloud network goes down, you still need someone able to get things back up, as quickly as possible.

All those cloud-related tasks take up time and consume resources, which is why more and more organizations are choosing to take advantage of managed cloud offerings. A managed cloud lets you outsource all the day-to-day management of your cloud and everything associated with it. Someone else, outside your organization, is charged with managing the infrastructure, the operating system, database, middleware and software products.

Eliminating the need to take up your employees' time and expertise doing routine cloud management tasks frees them to do the things that can truly help your company move forward. But the IFS Managed Cloud™ on Microsoft Azure offers two additional big benefits: The resources that developed your software are the same ones that manage the environment, and choosing the IFS Managed Cloud gives your company one resource to contact for all your ERP system needs.

In this white paper, we'll examine the benefits of the cloud and talk about how the IFS Managed Cloud may ultimately be the best option for your business.

SCALABILITY AND FLEXIBILITY

One of the biggest reasons to move your company's business operations from an on-premises deployment to the cloud is the flexibility it offers in terms of being quickly able to scale up or down in response to market pressures and business needs. When ERP systems are hosted on-premises, it's difficult to know exactly how much hardware you'll need to manage your business. Do

The cloud offers great benefits, but still takes time and resources to manage. Choosing a managed cloud frees up your team members to concentrate on tasks that can truly help grow your business.



you build a system based on what you need now? Or should you designate resources based on the amount of growth you anticipate in the next five years? Estimating the amount of growth your company may experience is often more of a guessing game than anything.

With a cloud deployment, scaling up in response to either steady or unexpectedly fast growth is easy. There's no need to order expensive new equipment, wait for it to arrive and figure out a place to put it all. The cloud provider takes care of almost everything.

As an example, we talked to a customer recently that over the past few years had grown dramatically through acquisition. When they look at their roadmap, they see themselves doubling or tripling in growth over the next five years. That's a fairly short timeframe considering that kind of growth. For that customer, deploying in the cloud is a perfect fit because they will very quickly be able to scale up.

The cloud's flexibility works the other way as well, giving businesses the ability to scale down during either expected or unexpected activity downturns. That's especially important for companies in industries like oil and gas, where there are regular boom and bust cycles.

But the need to scale up and down in response to internal projects can happen in any industry. For example, companies that decide to upgrade their ERP system can't just stop using their production environment, so they've got to scale up to create an entire duplicate of their environment to do the upgrade. In a matter of months, though, the company will want to start removing existing environments as they're rolling people onto the new one.

In another scale up-scale down scenario, a company many decide to make a change to its manufacturing process. You don't want to start doing that in your existing production environment, so you need to spin up a new one to test that process. A month down the road, after you've approved the new process, you'll want to spin that environment back down. If your system was deployed on-premises, you might have to buy new hardware for the spin-up, then you're left with excess capacity once the testing is done—and it's not like you can suddenly go and sell that server back to your hardware vendor.

The IFS Managed Cloud, of course, offers the same flexibility and scalability, but with a big difference. All the spinning up and down? You're no longer the one having to spend time managing that process. Instead, the managed cloud vendor does it all. That means that instead of performing routine maintenance tasks and putting out fires, your team can spend its time strategizing, experimenting and innovating.

Imagine the growth your business could experience if your IT professionals could spend their time focused on business development projects instead of on

maintaining computing structures. Every company has a different road map, but most are interested in growing their customer base and on getting more sales from existing customers. Your IT team can play a big role in making that happen—but only if their time isn't already spent on other tasks.

SINGLE-TENANT VS. MULTI-TENANT

The traditional cloud offering, and what most people think about when it comes to the cloud, is the software-as-a-service (SaaS) model. With SaaS, companies lease the software and it's configured so that your company is actually sharing infrastructure, storage and services with other customers. But that means you're also restricted to running exactly the same solution as the companies that you're sharing your cloud with. You have no control over the timing for upgrades, when patches are applied, and other maintenance issues.

The IFS Managed Cloud is a single-tenant solution in which each client has its own unique solution deployment. Companies are able to run exactly the same solution that they would choose if they were deploying on-premises. Companies can control when they do upgrades and patching, and every company identifies their own unique maintenance windows.

A single-tenant offering also means higher security, as each company is in its own isolated environment with no connections to other company's environments. Customers in shared environments like those provided by traditional SaaS systems can risk access to their proprietary information housed in the cloud. Your data and your information could potentially be exposed to competitors or to hackers.

THE STRENGTH AND REACH OF THE MICROSOFT AZURE CLOUD

The IFS Managed Cloud is built on Microsoft Azure, one of the most robust cloud platforms available today. The Microsoft Azure cloud has a global reach: Azure is in 140 countries and currently supports 10 languages and 24 currencies. Azure is available in more regions and countries than Amazon Web Services and Google Cloud combined. One of the biggest benefits of Azure's extensive network is its ability to offer geo-redundant storage (GRS) capabilities. With GRS, Microsoft will store all of a company's data in a secondary region more than 250 miles from a company's primary region.

The Azure cloud is also highly secure. Not only was Microsoft the first cloud provider to be recognized by the European Union for the company's commitment to EU privacy laws, they were also the first cloud provider to adopt the new international cloud privacy standard, ISO 27018.

The IFS Managed Cloud is built on Microsoft Azure, one of the strongest cloud offerings available. The Azure cloud is global, highly secure and is one of the easiest clouds to get up and running.

Choosing the managed cloud gives you one team to go to for all your application and cloud needs. If problems arise, that team is often able to fix them before they impact your business—usually before you're aware that the problem even exists.

Best of all for users, Microsoft Azure is one of the easiest clouds to get up and running. That means that the implementation time to deploy your applications in the IFS Managed Cloud could be significantly shorter than if you chose a different cloud platform provider.

THE BENEFITS OF BEING ON THE SAME TEAM

In a typical cloud deployment, there are at least three principal players: the company choosing to deploy its solutions in the cloud, the company (or multiple companies) that created the applications hosted in the cloud, and the cloud hosting company. With three or more separate collaborators, disconnects in understanding can and probably will occur.

When companies deploy their IFS solution in the IFS Managed Cloud, the resources who developed, created and delivered the software are the same ones who are now managing the environment. Nobody knows your software better than the people who created it. Who better to run the environment that your solution is housed in than the people who built that solution? Having the same team behind both the software and your cloud will give you the confidence you need that things will be handled as well as possible.

Depending on one team also brings another benefit. When companies experience problems with their solutions, it can often be difficult to immediately determine exactly where the problem lies and who should be contacted to solve it. When something goes down, a company's IT department is sometimes left scrambling to figure out what's gone wrong. Once the problem has been identified, only then can the proper channels be pursued to fix it, and by then, a lot of precious time has likely been wasted.

With the IFS Managed Cloud on Microsoft Azure, however, if an issue ever arises, IFS knows about it—and has it fixed—before you're even aware that there was a problem. With a typical on-premises deployment, the IT department doesn't know there's an issue until users come in in the morning and can't log in. When a solution is housed in the IFS Managed Cloud, IFS finds out the instant a problem arises or is in the process of developing, whether it's 3 in the afternoon or 3 in the morning. That issue will be resolved before your users are even aware of it.

Because we're in charge of your solution 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, we are constantly monitoring for problems. For example, we set thresholds for monitoring that may send us an alert that memory is getting a little tight. Our team then changes what needs to be changed before it ever becomes an issue for the customer.

SUMMARY

The cloud offers a number of benefits: the ability to quickly scale up or down and the elimination of the need to purchase and maintain equipment are among the biggest. The managed cloud offers those same advantages and more. Not only does the managed cloud allow you to outsource the management of all the hardware necessary to house your applications, it also frees your staff to work toward the future you envision for your business. Choosing the IFS Managed Cloud on Microsoft Azure means that the resources that developed your software are the same ones that manage the environment, and gives you one point of contact for all your IFS solution needs.

For more information on the IFS Managed Cloud on Microsoft Azure, visit www.ifsworld.com/cloud.

ABOUT IFS

IFS is a globally recognized leader in developing and delivering enterprise software for enterprise resource planning (ERP), enterprise asset management (EAM) and enterprise service management (ESM). IFS brings customers in targeted sectors closer to their business, helps them be more agile and enables them to profit from change. IFS is a public company (XSTO: IFS) that was founded in 1983 and currently has over 2,700 employees. IFS supports more than 2,400 customers worldwide from local offices and through a growing ecosystem of partners.

For more information about IFS, visit www.IFSWORLD.com

AMERICAS	+1 888 437 4968
ARGENTINA, BRAZIL, CANADA, ECUADOR, MEXICO, UNITED STATES	
ASIA PACIFIC	+65 63 33 33 00
AUSTRALIA, INDONESIA, JAPAN, MALAYSIA, NEW ZEALAND, PHILIPPINES, PR CHINA, SINGAPORE, THAILAND	
EUROPE EAST AND CENTRAL ASIA	+48 22 577 45 00
BALKANS, CZECH REPUBLIC, GEORGIA, HUNGARY, ISRAEL, KAZAKHSTAN, POLAND, RUSSIA AND CIS, SLOVAKIA, TURKEY, UKRAINE	
EUROPE CENTRAL	+49 9131 77 340
AUSTRIA, BELGIUM, GERMANY, ITALY, NETHERLANDS, SWITZERLAND	
EUROPE WEST	+44 1494 428 900
FRANCE, IRELAND, PORTUGAL, SPAIN, UNITED KINGDOM	
MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA	+971 4390 0888
INDIA, SOUTH AFRICA, SRI LANKA, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	
SCANDINAVIA	+46 13 460 4000
DENMARK, NORWAY, SWEDEN	
FINLAND AND THE BALTIC AREA	+358 102 17 9300
ESTONIA, FINLAND, LATVIA, LITHUANIA	



www.IFSWORLD.com

COPYRIGHT © 2016 INDUSTRIAL AND FINANCIAL SYSTEMS, IFS AB (PUBL). IFS AND ALL IFS PRODUCTS AND SERVICES NAMES ARE TRADEMARKS OF IFS. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. THIS DOCUMENT MAY CONTAIN STATEMENTS OF POSSIBLE FUTURE FUNCTIONALITY FOR IFS'S PRODUCTS AND TECHNOLOGY. SUCH STATEMENTS ARE FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY AND SHOULD NOT BE INTERPRETED AS ANY COMMITMENT OR REPRESENTATION. THE NAMES OF ACTUAL COMPANIES AND PRODUCTS MENTIONED HEREIN MAY BE THE TRADEMARKS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE OWNERS.

IFS AB ©2016