

Online, Mobile, Network & Physical - Securing the Spectrum

As Credit Unions become more and more comfortable with moving to the cloud, they have been asking a lot of questions. Here are some critical areas to consider when moving to the cloud:

Security - Each cloud provider and each type of cloud will provide a unique security profile. A public cloud probably requires the most scrutiny, while a private cloud implementation will let you know exactly what security you have. A community cloud can be the best way to get the most security. If built correctly it will enhance the security requirements for a particular niche or industry and allow for much greater security than a private cloud affords. Ultimately, looking at your due diligence documentation such as SSAE-16 or your Cloud Providers IT Security architecture and management processes is key.

Performance - The first component of the performance will involve connectivity. Making sure you have a top quality, high bandwidth, and redundant connection to your cloud provider is the most important step. Then the cloud can really shine - your cloud platform will allow you to allocate top or bottom performance directly linearly to price. Hence your most important applications like Online Banking or a Lending system are probably worth paying for the highest performance. The collections system that supports 3 people can probably be a level down and will save you some money. Ultimately the pay as you go model will allow the credit union to efficiently and cost effectively expand and contract to continually changing performance requirements.

Implementation Time - Generally speaking, your deployment of new or existing applications in a cloud environment should be a great deal faster. Your cloud provider should allow you on-demand access to servers, infrastructure, storage and everything else enabling you to call up and have a new environment working in no time at all. Migration is a different story. That requires much more time and attention to details to plan and execute a move to a cloud provider.

Costs - Cloud Computing expenses should be on-demand and pretty close to perfectly elastic. You should be able to pay for more when you need it and less when you don't. Our Cloudworks model allows for this elasticity pretty well. All applications are billed per user per month and are prorated based on utilization. Servers however are not billed based on usage. Instead, each client selects the level of server (think small, medium and large) for the application and that becomes fixed infrastructure that is billed on a monthly basis. Of course you can change the size on the fly but Cloudworks doesn't charge based on processor cycles. Finally, the biggest change to IT budgets will be the departure from large capital purchases and from large depreciation schedules. Instead, you will be able to just budget the monthly cost and not worry about useful life etc. You will also not need to buy extra to plan for future growth, changing software, more employees, etc.

Existing Systems - Many credit unions want us to take over their existing infrastructure and move them over time. Usually we are asked about their expensive SAN or new set of servers that were just purchased. Occasionally we can use your new asset in another part of our business. In a rare occasion we can use the purchase as part of our cloud platform. This is rare as we have very specific standards and requirements for our platform, most of the time the solutions you buy don't really work in a large cloud deployment. One area that rarely works is licensing. If you just bought a large number of Microsoft Licenses we cannot convert them to cloud. The good news is that you don't really have to purchase all new licenses. You simply pay for them on a monthly basis going forward.

Kirk Drake Founder & CEO




Kirk Drake
is founder and CEO of Ongoing Operations, LLC, a rapidly growing CUSO (Credit Union Service Organization) that provides complete business continuity and technology solutions.

With its recent acquisition of Cloudworks, Ongoing Operations has expanded its market niche and become the leader in hosted solutions for credit unions and their providers. Kirk is a well-known and respected industry leader with over 15 years of experience designing and implementing advanced IT Systems and Disaster Recovery Solutions. Prior to founding Ongoing Operations, he served as Chief Technology Officer for NIH Federal Credit Union, a \$400 million financial institution. During his time at NIH, Kirk spearheaded critical system conversions and led many projects to strategically advance the credit union, allowing it to better serve its members. Kirk is also an expert in designing collaborative solutions and developing innovative technology platforms. During Kirk's tenure at Ongoing Operations, the CUSO has grown to one of the top twenty CUSOs in the nation and successfully recovered numerous clients in actual disaster situations.

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