

Choosing a Cloud Computing Provider

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Making the choice – Which cloud computing provider is best suited for my needs?

Many service providers offer cloud infrastructure now, but all these services are unique, and often it becomes difficult to separate one from another. There are of course lot numbers of features which different providers give but the basic questions which you should be answering to ascertain which vendor is right for your needs are below.

- A. **Technical Support** - What happens when you need help? Can you find a human voice comforting you at the other end? This is going to happen very frequent during your initial days when you are migrating to Cloud.
- B. **Performance** – Most common concern because cloud infrastructure is still coming up, and lot of innovation is happening there. You cannot compare this on paper, as lots of things depend on whom you are sharing your resources with. So it is always better to try it firsthand and given such low cost entry

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Pricing by most of the providers, it makes more sense as well.

- C. **Data Security** – Who are the people with special access to my data? In which country is my data located? What are the regulatory compliances my provider is following? Don't worry much about the DoS (Denial of Service) attacks or hacking attacks. With providers like VMWare, lot of new security features have been added to the cloud computing.
- D. **Pricing and Contracts** – Wasn't the lure of reducing cost in these recessionary times, which drove you to Cloud computing? Yes, the pricing plays a major role, and most of the providers are providing competing prices if you leave aside Akamai, and Amazon. Look at the current pricing structure and shop around for the best deal. Also don't get into long-term contracts or vendor lock-in traps. At best go for month-to-month contract and always have a flexibility of ramping up or ramping down your resource requirements in 1-2 business days.
- E. **Worst Case Scenario** – Yes, Nothing would go wrong, but what happens in certain situations that will affect your business process. Providers do have processes in place but make sure to check with them on the same before signing up.
- F. **Support for Technology Stacks**- Amazon at the time of writing this

article was not supporting MS SQL Server 2008. All the providers are not supporting all technology stacks. Discuss in detail with the provider on their plan for supporting or discontinuing the technology stacks. This is very important, as you don't want to change your technology platform later on if the provider suddenly decides to upgrade the technology stack.

Before you start selecting your cloud-computing provider, understand what are your key priorities and needs. Technology is changing so fast (thanks to technology companies like Cisco, VM Ware, Microsoft and more investing in Cloud platform), that by the time you actually make a decision, cloud computing providers may have added new features or removed certain features.

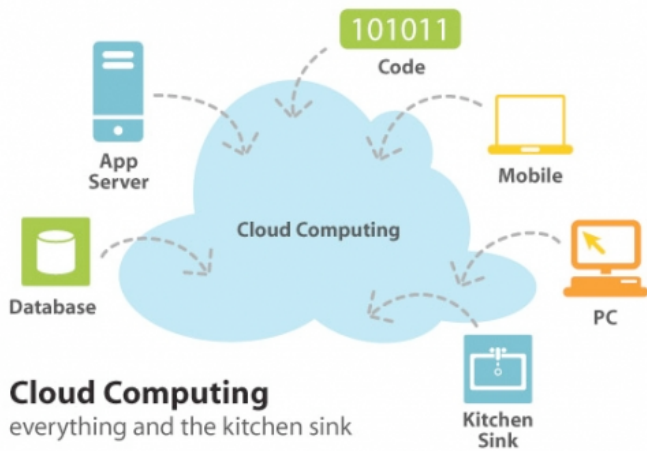
At the time of writing this article, here is our rating for some of the well-known service providers.

	Mosso	Go Grid	Amazon
Technical Support	Excellent	Good	Average
Performance	Good	Good	Good
Data Security	Good	Average	Average
Pricing and Contracts	Excellent	Excellent	Average
Worst Case Scenario	Good	Average	Average
Support for Technology Stacks	Excellent	Good	Average

Please do get in touch with our cloud computing experts when you are evaluating the cloud computing provider to take our most recent ratings of the providers.

Some of the other cloud computing providers which you can consider in evaluation are below.

- a. Akamai
- b. 3Tera
- c. Appistry
- d. AppNexus
- e. Flexiscale
- f. Terremark Enterprise Cloud



And in the end a word of caution. Make sure that you have looked at the following aspects of cloud computing as well before making your decision

- a. If your application relies on clustered servers heavily, it might not be a right fit because they require identical configuration of each server and large dedicated bandwidth among servers, which can't always be guaranteed by all the cloud vendors.
- b. Although your cloud provider has every security certification, you may still face problems in security audit if you applications are setup badly.
- c. Savings would definitely come but in mid-term to long-term if you are moving from existing dedicated servers to cloud.

Although cloud platform have not yet fully penetrated the enterprise, given the benefits of scalability and reduced cost, it is the future of enterprise computing.

Happy Evaluation!

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