

Maximising data availability using a multi-cloud approach

By [Trent Odgers](#)

5 Aug 2019

The ways businesses leverage cloud to manage and maximise the value of their data continues to evolve. Following the launch of two multi-national data centres in South Africa recently, the years when adopting cloud-based solutions felt like the first step into some brave new world are well and truly behind us.



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However, this is ushering a new era of multi-cloud deployment – one which is attracting attention, questions, and scepticism from local businesses.

A hybrid cloud is an amalgamation of on-premises “private cloud”, public cloud and managed Cloud Service Provider (CSPs) environments into a single entity where the data is physically located in multiple datacentres to deliver the right fit for a specific workload. It is a nod towards the fact that businesses are increasingly using different clouds for different purposes.

In today’s digital economy, 81% of enterprises are embracing a multi-cloud strategy and South African businesses have already adopted this digital gold rush with many more who are planning to do so.

It is common for the IT industry to promote the idea of a one-stop-shop or single provider strategy – to avoid the perceived inefficiency and confusion of dealing with multiple vendors.

This is the “traditional way” of doing IT, which had its place, but with the speed at which the world is changing, businesses can truly deliver on IT’s requirements using the hybrid approach.



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Data is now described as the new oil of the digital economy, and it has become a company’s most valuable resource. As businesses demand an infrastructure which maximises the potential value of that data, IT departments are under pressure to deliver.

For example, a business may wish to store data from its business unit in Google Cloud for scalability at relatively low expense but use Amazon Web Services (AWS) for its R&D databases to enjoy the benefits of AI and voice-assisted search. And in the same instance, that business could be using Microsoft Azure to help drive its productivity solutions or mission-critical enterprise resource planning processes, while keeping a copy of all the data on-premises or hosted at a local cloud provider.

Previously, the only viable decision for the business would have been to make a judgment call based on its priority needs and budget constraints. Today, the best strategic option is to adopt a multi-cloud approach.

Data-driven transformation

Already, there is a movement for organisations to become more data-driven. Decision-makers are recognising the importance of data in both high-level business strategy as well as on the operational side of their business.

Furthermore, consumers and employees are beginning to appreciate the true value of their data, which means businesses must ensure that the people who share data with them see the value in doing so through receiving more personalised experiences. People want to know that their data is protected, secure and also want greater transparency about what it is being used for.

Of course, in South Africa, this is where it is critical to adhere to corporate governance requirements, especially the likes of the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA). Fortunately, with local multi-national data centres, aspects such as data sovereignty and speed of accessing data are no longer concerns.

But creating this data-driven culture is underpinned by continuous digital transformation – embracing the latest and greatest technologies which allow the business to repeatedly lift its performance levels.

According to Gartner’s 2018 CIO Agenda report, making progress towards becoming a digital business is a top priority for CIOs – and the proliferation towards multi-cloud reflects this trend.

Despite this, the latest [Veeam Cloud Data Management Report](#) reveals that more than one in ten decision-makers said their organisation has experienced over 10 unplanned outages in the last 12 months, with 65 minutes being the average length of time unplanned outages last.

Successful multi-cloud deployments depend on the always-on availability of all apps and data. So, businesses looking to

take advantage of multi-cloud environments must ensure that their apps and data are always available – and that their culture of data-driven decision-making is fully supported to maintain customer confidence and brand reputation.

Availability in the multi-cloud

The complexity of maintaining availability within a multi-cloud environment is the reliance on multiple Cloud Service Providers (CSPs). While all major vendors and CSPs will make backup and disaster recovery (DR) solutions available to their customers, each provider has different protocols, shared responsibility models, service level agreements (SLAs) and capabilities.

The last thing any business wants to hear when disaster strikes is that they are not adequately protected or that recovery has failed. While no business, regardless of whether it is using multi-cloud or not, can guarantee that it will never experience unplanned downtime, every business can ensure that it is prepared for this possibility.

Even having local data centres is no guarantee that there will never be any downtime. South African businesses opting for multi-cloud need to ensure that they have an availability solution which sits across their entire cloud platform, making cloud data protection easy with a seamless process for sending data offsite to the cloud.

For businesses using multi-cloud to power their digital transformation in the bid to establish a more data-driven culture across the organisation, data is akin to running water – a utility which all rely on and must be available at all times.

Businesses embracing multi-cloud should not be put off by the prospect of working with multiple vendors as software-based platforms can give the peace of mind and a turnkey solution to minimising downtime.

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