

A smart approach to solving multi-cloud storage challenges

 By [Hayden Sadler](#)

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Statistics gathered from the Gartner Symposium held in Cape Town in September 2018, stated that 60% of South African organisations use cloud services today. This percentage is expected to increase with the imminent rollout of local data centres by public cloud powerhouses, creating a 'market' where organisations will be able to choose between local or global public cloud and private cloud environments.



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However, as more companies become concerned with where their data resides and the implications of data sovereignty, there is a perception that local public cloud is the 'best' option for the business. This is not necessarily the case, as there are alternative options that allow businesses to leverage the benefits that local and global public cloud environments offer, whilst maintaining data sovereignty through a private cloud solution. Importantly, businesses can take advantage of price competitiveness between various public clouds in real-time, saving them money.

Going back to basics before 'leaping' into the public cloud

Before migrating to any cloud environment, companies need to revert to their fundamental storage requirements, which include robust storage and data protection capabilities that are easily leveraged to address their biggest data management and data protection challenges.

They also need to consider whether they simply require primary storage, business continuity, disaster recovery, analytics and management and what their security requirements are.

Once this is established, the next logical step is to assess which environment is best for the business. However, companies also need to understand the complexity and costs that go hand in hand with any cloud migration.

Clearing the fog around hidden costs

Despite the many benefits associated with the imminence of a local public cloud presence, there are hidden expenses around data migration that could impede a cloud strategy, such as the cost of retrieving data or moving it between clouds. What many businesses don't know is that solutions are available that close the gap between datacentre and clouds.

Here, cloud -adjacent storage platforms are used in datacentres, thereby, allowing customers to move data between the datacentre and cloud with ease, solving these challenges.

Unshackling the chains of cloud provider lock in

Although the cloud is built around agility and flexibility, there is also the issue of cloud provider lock-in. This is particularly relevant where organisations migrate large enterprise solutions to the cloud, preventing these companies from taking advantage of price competitiveness between various cloud providers, creating a barrier to cloud brokerage.

Furthermore, public cloud providers have different billing mechanisms based on capacity requirements, data egress, performance, protection requirements, etc., and it's not easy to predict exactly what the costs will be upfront. It is imperative to look towards innovative software-centric data storage solutions that provide the choice of cloud platforms while data is stored in an on-premise, private cloud environment, enabling businesses to not only more accurately predict costs but save too.

Putting the 'smart' into cloud storage is possible

Although storage has traditionally been regarded as functional yet unwieldy and complex, smart software-centric storage technologies resolve many of the often unseen challenges associated with the cloud. They allow businesses to take advantage of the benefits that public cloud platforms offer without the many downsides that can weigh down a cloud migration.

Companies should also have the option of choosing different pricing models that work for them, whether based on consumption, a common choice, allowing for flexibility as the businesses data storage requirements grow or shrink, or

simply a monthly, or one off, add-more-as-you-need basis.

These solutions provide organisations that choose to leverage the cloud with the ability to easily move workloads without moving their data, mitigating the cost factors associated with this. Irrespective of whether the businesses data resides in a public cloud or private cloud, they should have flexibility from built-in multi-cloud capability, attractive economics and enterprise class features, such as single view of data and the availability demanded by business operations.

Rather than facing a trade off when weighing up the options of local public cloud, global public cloud or private cloud, businesses should thoroughly research the pros and cons of all. The trick is to strike the right balance which may well mean separating your data from applications or infrastructure in the public cloud (local or global), while still enjoying the benefits they have to offer. A win-win for all.

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