

# SME technology in 2020 - a path to efficiency

 By [Aaron Thornton](#)

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While many businesses are hurriedly turning their attention to technologies such as AI, machine learning and IoT to stay ahead in 2020, we believe that savvy SMEs will make less 'trendy' moves in place of getting certain fundamentals right.



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This would be a smart move. Often, getting the technology mix right is a slow and very deliberate process, as opposed to a rapid and awe-inspiring one!

So, what should SMEs be doing in 2020 to ensure optimal technology efficiency?

## **Embrace fully managed cloud solutions**

Without a doubt, SMEs should explore a wholesale shift to completely managed and cloud-based IT. Encouragingly, a small percentage of agile small businesses are completely cloud-based - with a mobile workforce, to boot!

Such a transition means that the business has no power-guzzling server in the office, and employees' laptops carry no sensitive data, either. At closer inspection, this means that the office itself is becoming redundant! One only has to look up these days to notice the prevalence of slick collaborative workspaces (think WeWork) and increasingly popular hot desk environments.

Today, this shift is being driven by the adoption of the cloud and key subsets of cloud computing such as Software-as-a-Service (SaaS).

If one simply looks at what is possible within the Microsoft Office 365 "stack" alone, you will see that the majority of applications that a small business needs are native to this environment. Notably, such applications have a "single sign-on" function that allows for ease of use, strong security and efficiency.

Additionally (and this is critical!), once you operate within this environment, there are incredible business intelligence and analytics benefits – primarily because multiple aspects of the operation are now running in a single environment that has been made for the purpose. Do you need a nerd-flavoured translation here?

So, with this type of application, your business data is easily and automatically collated and made available to you, the owner, to make swift decisions that will drive operational efficiency.

### **Always be on high alert**

A significant driver of widespread cloud adoption is the ever-increasing threat of cyber-attacks – along with shadow IT, and malware (ransomware in particular). These threats will only increase into 2020. Cyber fraud/hacking is now a highly sophisticated and very profitable industry, and every business represents a target (no matter its size or sector).

For example, if one looks into "malware as a service" online, you will quickly see that it is now a business model that one can adopt, quickly and easily. Today, you can pay for a subscription to one of many providers of malicious software and get a unique key that identifies you as the "reseller" (for lack of a better word)...and the more people you can infiltrate or infect, the more money can be made.

As a business owner, you have to be on high alert and provide frequent cyber awareness training for everyone within the company. This should involve regular 'testing' to see where the weak spots lie...

### **Rocketing towards 5G**

2020 could be the year of ultra-fast computing for your increasingly mobile business. Why?

Tech experts and telecoms companies are all getting very excited about 5G. This is essentially the latest iteration of wireless data standards and promises to be around 10 times faster than the current state-of-the-art 4G used by cellphone networks (while also being more reliable).

Around the world, 5G mobile data networks became available for the first time in 2019, although they were very expensive and limited to functioning in confined areas. 2020 is likely to be the year when 5G really takes off – with data-only network provider Rain looking to be the local trailblazer.

In September 2019, Rain stated that selected existing customers had been invited to use the new ultra-fast network with unlimited internet access for R1,000 a month. Impressively, Rain's chief marketing officer told the media that the company has achieved speeds of 700 Mbps during testing (but the typical client will see speeds around 200 Mbps).

In short, the world is barrelling towards superfast mobile internet speeds – and web surfing bliss!

## ABOUT AARON THORNTON

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