

The sky is full of clouds? Find the right one for you!

Christian Leutner, Head of Product Sales Europe at Fujitsu

Moving to the cloud has become the default position for most organizations wanting to modernize operations. There are good reasons for this – with significant cost, scalability and flexibility benefits from cloud migration. But is it the right choice in every circumstance? Are we sometimes too quick to reject the option of keeping data closer to hand?

Surprisingly, the answer isn't always "In the cloud". Let's think about what that really means. Typically, "the cloud" means the public cloud, hosted by an app provider, a hyper-scaler, or a service provider of some other description – the so-called xSPs. It could also mean a "private cloud", usually hosted by an xSP on dedicated servers. But what about "on-premises cloud"? What is it and does it have a role to play as well?

Some apps and workloads still need to be close to you

On-premises cloud sounds somewhat counter-intuitive but bear with me. It has numerous advantages that often do not get enough consideration when the circumstances are right.

What I have in mind are the apps and workloads that should still belong on-premises. There are several reasons for keeping them close. Legislation is one – particularly data protection laws that require a specific geographic location. Latency is another – electronic data is fast, but with each leg of the data's journey to the cloud possibly involving a trip to the other side of the world, there might be issues for specific workloads. Then there's security – the hyper-scale cloud providers have definitely got their houses in order here in recent years. However, risks remain that might be too great for some hyper-sensitive apps, especially in the public cloud. Then there are apps so customized by your organization over the years that they define your business's very nature. You just need them close by to handle any issues that come up.

Right workload – right place

Cost savings are often held up as a primary reason for migrating to the cloud. And, of course, cost is always an important issue – we all know that. Used right, then cloud can save costs – but for lift and shift, it can end up costing a lot more – not to mention the data egress charges if you decide to move workload between clouds or back to on-premises. As one analyst I talked to put it, public cloud is like a taxi – it's cheaper if you only take occasional journeys, but if you keep it 24 hours a day, put

it in your garage at night, then, of course, it's going to work out more expensive than owning your own car.

These days, you can get all the cloud model's cost and scalability advantages while keeping your apps on-premises. If cost is the primary driver, you can also consider a cloud-like infrastructure on-premises, using Fujitsu's uSCALE pay-per-use model instead of cloud.

uSCALE is a best-of-both-worlds paradigm. Customers gain immediate access to the latest high-end infrastructure technology with no upfront payment, plus the flexibility to scale up and down, depending on whether things go well or if there is further disruption.

The savings can be dramatic. We recently configured a uSCALE IoT solution for a global engineering company resulting in a 71% reduction in cloud spend. In another real-world example, our UK customer Harbor Solutions sourced the solution it needed for backup, disaster recovery, and object storage. With a uSCALE consumption model, it gets on-premises PRIMEFLEX for Nutanix Enterprise Cloud, Backup-as-a-Service (BaaS) and Disaster Recovery-as-a-Service (DRaaS). Costs are still shifted from CAPEX to OPEX, taking the solution off-books and delivering expandable data center capacity to meet variations in data demands.

As you can see, the economics with this model can look even better than the cloud.

With this sort of flexibility on offer now, cost should no longer be a primary driver of migration. Instead, identify the right cloud for the right workload, and include your own data center in those calculations.

If it's not cost, then what's the right question?

What are the right drivers to be considering in your choice of cloud locations? To help our customers get to grips with this, Fujitsu has created a proven methodology. Our Data-Driven Transformation Strategy (DDTS) provides a four-step framework that helps allocate workloads to the most appropriate location as part of a broader digital transformation agenda.

The four stages have been designed to help customers explore, create, protect and monetize their data. They are:

1. Define the data transformation baseline
2. Create the target data architecture
3. Protect and secure data
4. Deliver business value

We go through this process to understand your challenge – as part of a performance-centric ROI assessment. I'm focusing here on stage two – finding the right cloud for the right process. You can see we are aligned with your bigger picture – how to extract the most value from your data. In stage two, specifically, we identify, design and implement the right architecture for you – keeping a completely open mind so that the right cloud could be your own on-premises data center.

What's your question?

In our opinion, before concluding that the cloud is the answer, it's worth really examining the question you are trying to solve. That is how you can have cloud-like performance and savings – while solving potentially painful headaches like data residency, latency, security, and the highly customized nature of your core apps. We know this is territory very well, and approach these challenges with an open mind and highly innovative solutions.

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Christian Leutner is Vice President and Head of Product Sales for the EMEA region at Fujitsu. He focuses on providing customers with the technologies and underlying expertise to drive data-driven transformation.

Based in Bonn, Germany, Christian has worked in the IT product and services industry for more than 20 years.

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