

There's a new SA cloud market emerging

By [Dana Cinman](#)

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Thanks to the arrival of Microsoft Azure data centres in South Africa, it is expected that more born-in-the-cloud organisations will start taking root here. And with smaller companies now finding it easier to migrate to an online environment, these are exciting times for solutions providers.



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Previously, businesses were mainly moving their non-critical applications to Azure given the regulatory restrictions around what data could be stored outside the country. Now, information can be stored locally, nullifying the restrictions around the Protection of Personal Information Act. Furthermore, the problem of latency has also been solved thanks to fast local connectivity.

Given that smaller companies have fewer legacy systems and less data to be moved via the internet or virtual private networks, they have an advantage over large enterprises. Even so, the biggest factor in driving cloud services is the ability to democratise IT services on a pay-as-you-use basis.

Price wars

With the local data centres up and running, there is hope that pricing will come down, making solutions even more affordable to those organisations that are price-sensitive. Of course, irrespective of whether data is hosted or stored in the cloud, there will always be a certain amount of risk involved.

While Microsoft has the best resources available to ensure its environment is secure, local companies must still work with trusted business partners who can offer them an additional security layer for their data. This is especially important considering Microsoft (and most other cloud providers) will only protect organisational data to a point. When it comes to moving data from the local office (or devices) into the cloud, the company still has a responsibility to ensure it takes all possible precautions to keep it secure.

The country is already on the verge of a cloud boom with many business partners emerging whose sole focus is delivering solutions for an online environment. Moreover, the ones that provide the likes of infrastructure-as-a-service and migration to the cloud in addition to cost optimisation, cloud frameworks, and other facets, will be the ones most successful.

New approaches

Companies have begun running more critical workloads in parallel with their on-premise systems. Once a level of comfort has been reached that the cloud provides a reliable enough platform to deliver the expected results, this will turn into an online-only focus.

For the past several years, Microsoft has embraced open source in the cloud using partners to help it modernise the DevOps processes driven by the containerisation of infrastructure and applications. These also scale quickly given the availability of a significant number of orchestration tools.

This will result in the availability of best-fit solutions that carry with them no fear of vendor lock-in and interoperability of their environments.

Hybrid world

And when it comes to a hybrid cloud approach, company strategies must start including the ability for multi-cloud management tools, easy billing, multi-tenancy, and self-service capabilities. Although many are already using self-service capabilities, some businesses are opting to use experts in these areas to prevent cloud wastage and unnecessary spend.

As with most other technology approaches, cost optimisation is the key. To this end, consumption-based models are more efficient than capital expenditure especially when it comes to on-premise hardware.

Many local customers have been waiting for announcements from service providers regarding the launch of local data centres before embarking on their cloud journey and strategy. Now is the time to embrace this change.

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