

Africa-as-a-Service

 By [Chris Ogden](#)

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It's the era of as-a-service (aaS). Everything from software to infrastructure to insights to security now has its very own as-a-service slot that can be accessed by any company, anywhere, on demand.



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According to Gartner ^[1], the worldwide public cloud services market is set to grow by 21.4% in 2018 and is predicted to be worth a hefty total of \$186.4bn. It's a lucrative space to be in, but its growth is as much driven by inventive solutions as by its very ubiquity and accessibility.

Taking advantage of local and international markets

For the African continent, the cloud is enabling organisations to reach over the hurdles that have traditionally hampered their growth and expansion, giving them the tools and resources they need to take advantage of local and international markets with far greater ease and scope.

The *Cloud Africa 2018 Report* ^[2] by World Wide Worx for F5 Networks showed that cloud uptake across Africa was driven by factors such as business efficiency, scalability and speed of deployment. The percentage of engagement across the different countries varied dependent on the existing conditions, the complexities of infrastructure and each market's unique conditions.

However, across all surveyed, the cloud is taking priority as an investment. Why?

Because the cloud is allowing organisations across Africa to leapfrog legacy challenges in infrastructure that have previously impacted on growth and efficiency.

“ In addition to its scalability and accessibility, the cloud allows for more realistic pricing and mitigates the initial, large capex (capital expenditure) outlay that has dogged the footsteps of most IT solutions. ”

In the past, new technology investments required hardware, dedicated IT staff, space and ongoing maintenance costs. With as-a-service, it's as simple as selecting the service, the package and the price tag while leaving the rest of the issues to the service provider.

A new way of thinking

The as-a-service solution is easily managed and gives the business access to quality services and products for a small opex (operational expenditure) amount. This month-to-month flexibility is rapidly becoming the new way of thinking for most organisations keen to move away from on-premise problems and just focus on business results.

It's easy to see why as-a-service is incredibly relevant to a continent that's hampered by limited infrastructure, complex connectivity challenges, and varied access to skills. Not only does this model help set these issues aside, but it grants the local business access to the international stage. Competing is no longer a case of battling through the limitations of ageing or incompetent architecture to put a battered product at the door of the international customer. It's suddenly just as simple for African ingenuity to shine on any platform.



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One of the biggest advantages for any business, not just those in Africa, is the reduction in cost.

The as-a-service offering allows the business to opt into a service, test it out for a while and leave, without the long-term commitment. This ubiquity is not as effortless as it sounds, of course, but it does allow for the business to take advantage of technologies that previously may have been too costly or too complex to invest into in the past.

Organisations can find the best tools for their models across anything from firewalls to software to platforms to infrastructure to insights. Almost everything is available as-a-service and those solutions that aren't, soon will be.

As-a-service isn't perfect

Of course, as-a-service isn't perfect. It's not the panacea that will cure the ills of Africa in one cloud, connected swoop. But it does allow for the organisation to gain easier access to digital tools and use services more effectively.

Growth is more strategic as the focus is on the business, not on the large capex spend that comes with the technology required to ignite that growth. It lowers the cost of ownership from the outset, provides the business with options so they can develop their own digital tools to suit their own unique business model, and enables flexibility.

“ For Africa, a continent powered by mobility, the as-a-service model unlocks that potential even further and provides an opportunity for expansion deeper into newmarkets. ”

While as-a-service can bring its own set of challenges, today it is one of the fastest ways to step over the limitations that

have traditionally impacted on African companies and into the future.

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Sources:

[1] [Gartner](#)

[2] [Cloud Africa 2018 Report](#)

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