

A high-angle photograph of a woman with her hair in a bun, wearing a light-colored sweater, sitting on a wooden bench outdoors. She is working on a laptop. A white mug of coffee sits on the bench next to her. In the background, there is a green watering can and some foliage. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting daytime.

eBook:

HARNESSING THE CLOUD IN TOMORROW'S WORKSPACE

How cloud can support
efficient, secure collaboration,
whatever your working model

Canon

ASL

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INTRODUCTION

Before the start of 2020, cloud computing was already firmly established in the business world. Across industries, cloud was one of the fastest-growing segments of IT spend. The final quarter of 2019 marked the biggest incremental rise in public cloud infrastructure services ever seen, with \$2.8bn growth¹.

However, cloud has now become more crucial than ever before. The pandemic has forced businesses to rapidly adjust, enabling their employees to work remotely and becoming dependant on cloud platforms to maintain 'business as usual.' With many global brands, from Barclays to Twitter, already confirming they intend to extend home working on a more permanent basis. In this new landscape, cloud will become a crucial backbone of 'the new normal', particularly in ensuring teams can collaborate easily and securely wherever they are.





Chapter 1

REVOLUTIONISING BUSINESS

Cloud offers a host of benefits which have made it the transformational technology it is today, and the essential technology it will be in our future.

“Adoption of next-generation solutions are almost always ‘cloud-enhanced’ solutions, meaning they build on the strengths of a cloud platform to deliver digital business capabilities.”²

– Gartner



1

Driving Innovation



Low cost access

Without the need for physical infrastructure, and the operational and labour costs that come with it, cloud technology removes the typical financial barriers to innovation and digital transformation. Smaller businesses who would traditionally struggle to come up with the upfront investment required for on-premise implementations, can access new capabilities through cloud-delivery models.



Low risk investment

Cloud has also reduced the risks associated with investment. The scalability of cloud computing means offerings can grow or shrink back depending on the needs of the company, helping to manage costs and financial risk.



Safe space to innovate

Meanwhile, cloud offers a platform on which to create prototypes and build apps, without the need for complex infrastructure. This allows businesses to innovate more freely.

2

Supporting Collaboration



Another of the key benefit of cloud-based platforms is that they enable teams to collaborate more easily wherever they are. Even in an office set up, workflows can easily become convoluted and inefficient. Cloud-based workflows support better efficiency by making processes more transparent. Updates to a process made by one team member are captured and made available to other team members instantly, facilitating faster teamwork and avoiding issues with version control.

In fact, research shows that online collaboration tools can improve team efficiency and enable employees to stick to their task for 64%³ longer than those who are working alone. The reasons behind this are no surprise - employees have faster access to information, immediate feedback and can more easily manage documents and tasks.



3

Simplifying Software



One of the reasons that cloud has revolutionised the software market is how it has simplified its delivery compared to on-premise solutions. From the buying process, to the maintenance, cloud infrastructure is an easier experience for businesses. With this model, introducing new capabilities is more straightforward, as cloud-delivered services are designed to better integrate with existing or third-party solutions. In terms of management, cloud services ease the burden on inhouse IT teams by placing the responsibility on the vendor to manage typically time-consuming and expensive maintenance activity. Meanwhile, updates to the software are rolled out by the provider, meaning that organisations benefit from up to date functionality without having to purchase and implement updated versions.

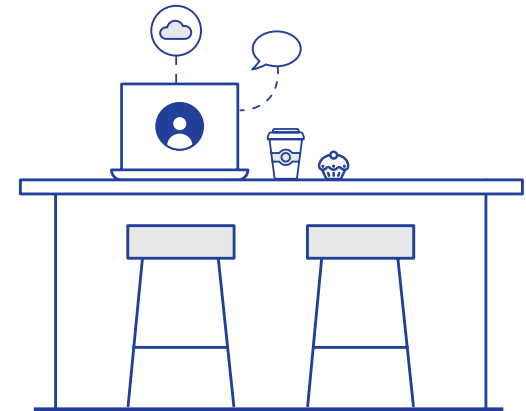
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Enabling Agility



Every business wants to be agile; it's crucial for success in today's fast-moving world.

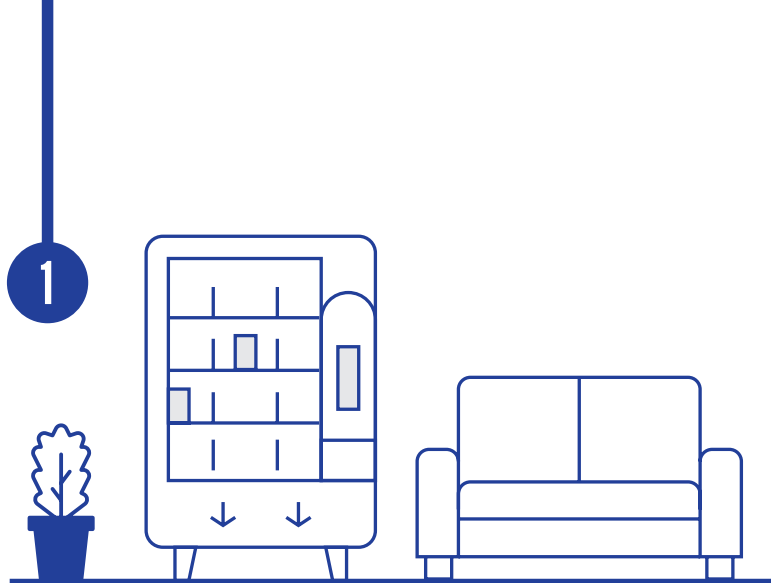
Cloud allows organisations to be more flexible by supporting both an office and remote working set up. This provides businesses a strong base to enable a variety of different workplace scenarios, without having to make significant, expensive changes to their IT setup as their needs change.



Chapter 2

ENABLING FUTURE WORKSPACES

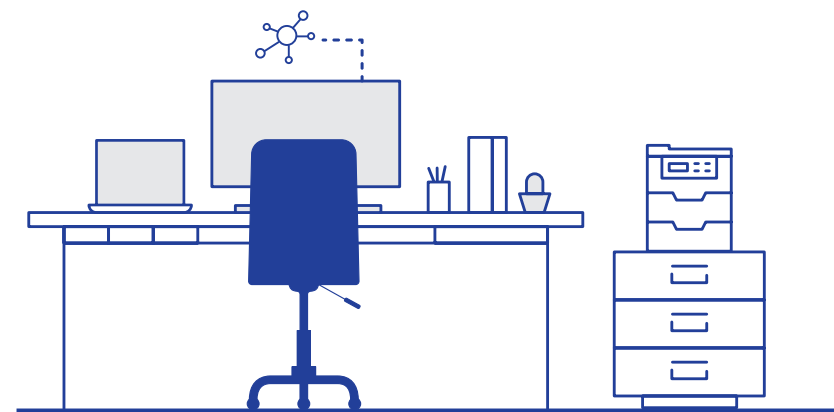
Cloud has long been enabling more flexible ways of working and will be more vital for our future workspaces as we move away from traditional models.



Co-working Model

Co-working spaces have seen a huge uplift in the last few years, driven by the ethos that the four story, permanent office is declining and that what businesses really need is an office-space-as-a-service – to be used as and when required.

Originally favoured by cloud-first SMBs, the co-working model best supports businesses who are designed to work in a mobile way. Large enterprises, who have now been pushed to invest in supporting remote working may find themselves better equipped to adopt this model, saving themselves the costs of renting large, fixed office space.

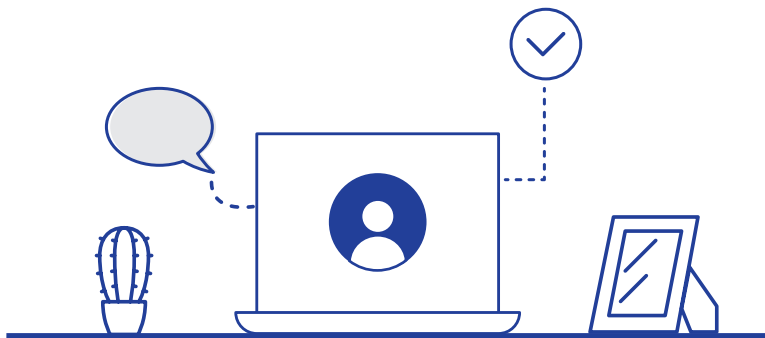


Workspace-as-a-Service

While typically tech vendors have sold individual products and solutions, we may see the rise of 'workspace-as-a-service' where vendors offer a package of technology to customers which provide everything they need for a workspace, remote or otherwise. This will include hardware, software, office furniture etc., all on subscription.



3



Remote Working

In 2014, Fast Company speculated that half the population might be working remotely by 2020⁴. However, in 2019 these numbers hadn't materialised. Despite the arguments for remote working, many large organisations in particular have been resistant to change. 2020 has forced the issue however, ensuring almost every organisation implemented large scale home-working.

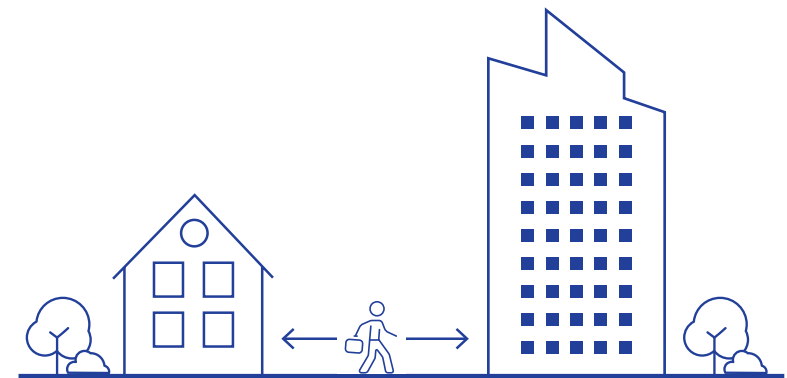
As a result, many organisations who had previously not utilised the cloud have had to move fast to ensure business continuity in the face of disruption. By March 2020 Microsoft officials said the company has seen a 775% increase in demand for its cloud services in regions enforcing social distancing due to COVID-19⁵.

It's likely that we'll discover that business has changed forever. For one, concentration and efficiency may see a rise. Without long commutes and noisy, distracting offices, many employees may find they are more efficient, productive, happier – and in turn healthier – at home.

4

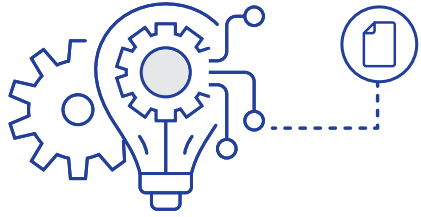
Flexible Workspace

The most likely scenario is a combination of all these models, with most large organisations retaining some office space, while employees work between this space and other locations. This allows workers to adopt the way which best suits their needs, while ensuring that office space is still available even for the likes of essential face-to-face meetings or training.



“Covid-19 could permanently shift working patterns as companies forced to embrace remote working by the pandemic find that their employees do not want to return to the office once the closures are lifted.”⁶

– The Guardian



Chapter 3

PREPARING FOR THE NEW WORLD

With any of these new working environments, businesses need to consider how they will function day to day. At the heart of this is how information is going to flow through their business. In a physical office it's possible to fall back on traditional ways of storing and communicating information, but these can't continue in a partially virtual workspace. The business world is therefore now facing the pressure of an accelerated digital transformation.

It is a reality that most organisations still rely on paperwork, printing and manual processes in some way, typically managing a balance of manual and digital ways of working in a hybrid environment. These processes still need to be supported in a world with a distributed workforce. Here, cloud will play a crucial role in this evolution, enabling businesses to work in a more effective, dynamic way which transcends a physical location.





Collaboration

Businesses need to be mindful that without being able to 'grab' colleagues for a quick catch up, collaboration is going to be more difficult. However, it's essential that a distributed workforce doesn't result in low productivity, inefficient workflows and frustrated, isolated employees. This doesn't have to be the case. Collaboration technologies are designed to support better teamwork regardless of location. In order to support efficient collaboration, IT teams should consider:

- **What applications do employees use to share documents?**
- **Could employees access all required folders if they were working from outside the office?**
- **How do employees usually collaborate on documents, will this be supported in distributed locations?**
- **Which workflows require physical paperwork, for example managerial signatures?**
- **How could these processes be managed if employees were based in distributed locations?**
- **What, if any solutions does your business have in place to support with data capture/entry?**
- **What, if any solutions does your business have in place to support with workflow tracking? E.g., to prevent bottlenecks and improve efficiency?**

How we can help

We understand that the future of the workspace is not black and white. Your organisation will be operating a dynamic working model, balancing remote and on-premise working. That balance may well need to evolve and change depending on external events and new strategies. Your business needs to survive these changes easily without disruption to the normal flow of information through your business. That's why it's important to use technologies which give you that flexibility. Here cloud is crucial.

Our Digital Transformation Services are designed to help you support better collaboration in your workforce, regardless of where they are based. Our offering includes cloud-delivered, on-premise and hybrid solutions that support your migration to digitisation. Regardless of a distributed workforce, these solutions give you oversight and control of your documents throughout their lifecycle, helping you optimise document management, streamline business processes and deliver optimised, secure and sustainable print infrastructure.



Security & Compliance

Organisations need to have robust measures in place to keep their documents and information secure, despite a potentially distributed workforce. Outside of the network employees can potentially be more vulnerable to making errors or being targeted by malicious actors. For example, since remote working has increased, there has been a sharp rise in phishing attacks⁸.

It's important for organisations to try to balance enabling employees to work freely and productively, while minimising risk. Collaboration shouldn't come at the expense of security, and that can be a real risk as companies rush to support new working models. Research from IDC in March 2020 found that organisations were deprioritising security investment in favour of spending on reinforcing collaboration capabilities⁸.

While cloud collaboration platforms make working together easy, they also create additional security concerns. Where it's easier to share files it's sometimes harder to enforce best practice. Cloud collaboration platforms like Teams enable employees to have a greater share of the control, with less oversight of their IT team. For example, employees can create and manage new teams and share files inside or outside the organisation.

More than one-third (36%) of executives say that cyber threats have increased since the majority of their employees have worked from home.⁷



In order to protect the business, it's essential that IT teams understand how information is shared and stored across the organisation in this new world. For example:

- What applications will employees be using to share documents internally and externally?
- How can we ensure that employees cannot accidentally access sensitive information, for example, HR records?
- How can we enforce business compliance rules such as deletion policies?
- How do we ensure the secure access of employees to company information from outside the company network?
- From what locations will employees need to print?
- How will printed documents be secured in a shared workspace?
For example to prevent employees from another organisation seeing sensitive company information?



How we can help

Canon has been recognised by the IDC MarketScape as a leader in worldwide security solutions and services⁹. We create products and solutions which are secure by design and able to preserve confidentiality, meet regulatory compliance and maintain business continuity.

Information is an organisation's most important asset, so protecting it is critical. With our three-pronged approach, we can help you take control of information throughout the document lifecycle.



Access management

Control who can access your cloud-based documents, printers or content management system by setting user authentication and permission rights.



Secure communication

Files can move securely to and from laptops, printers and cloud storage platforms as they are encrypted in transit and at rest.



Data security

By using regional data centres we can support you in achieving data compliance by respecting data sovereignty.



CONCLUSION

Recent global events have had a major impact on the future of business, the long-term results of which are yet to be seen. However, it's likely that more organisations will be approaching flexible models for business, with a combination of onsite and remote working. In these new environments, information still has to flow easily, otherwise collaboration and productivity will be badly impacted. After all, modern information cycles are already complex – most businesses are using a combination of print and digital workflows and these still need to be supported.

Harnessing cloud-delivered information management services gives companies the tools to manage new business environments. Regardless of the balance of remote and on-premise working, managing the document lifecycle through the cloud allows businesses to remain in control, enabling employees to collaborate, share and print efficiently and securely.

At Canon, we can support your unique journey towards digitisation. We offer cloud-delivered, on-premise and hybrid solutions which allow you to maximise and build on existing investments, taking new steps towards transformation.



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