Keep up with the cloud
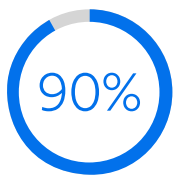
Trends to watch for a future-ready network

In the past decade, organizations have seen the tools they use for work move from on-site resources to servers hosted in the cloud by third-party service providers. This often provides immediate savings for data storage and processing while also making it easier to create redundancy with resources backed up in data centers. As a result, 90% of companies are on the cloud.[1] Network integration with cloud service providers will only become tighter in the years ahead.

This guide outlines the opportunities on the horizon, as well as ways to meet the challenges of creating a flexible, modernized network that keeps up with the cloud to ensure your organization stays competitive.

5 reasons for the cloud migration

1. **As-a-service applications**
    Software as a service (SaaS) has become the default business model for solutions that enhance productivity, customer relationship management and business processes. Platforms like Amazon Web Services (AWS) and Microsoft Azure offer entire operating systems, databases and sophisticated tools for application development — all as a service. Even network infrastructure can now be delivered as a service, which is particularly valuable for smaller organizations needing to extend the capabilities of their IT teams.

2. **The Internet of Things**
    The cloud provides enterprise-class processing power to realize the full potential of interconnected devices. The Internet of Things (IoT) can be used for remote monitoring of manufacturing equipment to predict mechanical problems before they happen. Asset tracking with IoT sensors can give organizations a real-time view of their supply chains. Smart buildings can automatically control lighting, access and ventilation, while connected cameras offer insights into visitor activity. The number of active IoT devices is expected to double by 2030.[3] As a result, organizations will need the right solutions to manage the resulting increase in network traffic to interconnect IoT devices.

3. **Security**
    One study found that vulnerabilities that have a patch available for over a year are exploited in 68% of cyberattacks.[4] Data stored in the cloud is centralized, making it easier to apply consistent security measures to the data and its access through automated updates by the cloud serviceprovider. This keeps data safe without needed intervention from an organization's IT team.

4. **Collaboration**
    Voice, video and chat applications are no longer limited to people connected directly to an organization's local area network (LAN) or WAN. Collaboration tools in the cloud make it possible to connect employees anywhere, even opening the possibility for organizations to hire people in other parts of the country to find the talent they need.

90%

of companies are on the cloud.[2]

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5. **Flexibility and scalability**
    Customer needs and business environments are changing rapidly, and organizations must keep up to stay competitive. Cloud applications and infrastructure are inherently scalable. Without the need for capital investment in equipment on-site, cloud connectivity solutions allow organizations to be agile, adopting the exact capabilities they need today with the ability to expand network resources quickly in response to the business demands of tomorrow.

Increased traffic from cloud applications will only make the network complexity problem more important to solve.

Trends to watch for a future-ready network

Organizations are moving to the cloud for the flexibility and scalability it provides as their current networks have become too complex to keep up with the current business environment. But organizations are now realizing they need to adapt their networks to keep up with the demands being placed on them by the cloud. The best way to do this is to modernize their networks to make them future ready. There are five trends to watch to create a future-ready network that can work seamlessly with the cloud.

1. **All-in-one platforms**
    In order to make a network more agile, it needs to be simplified. It's now possible to bring all of the technologies of a network, such as routing, security and SD-WAN into a single platform. This approach to network modernization optimizes network resources for better performance. It also reduces demands on IT while making it easier to adjust the network's capabilities as demands from cloud applications increase.

95%

of technology managers face challenges finding talent.[6]

2. **Modular services**
    The dynamic nature of cloud applications can quickly challenge the capacity of a network. Your digital infrastructure will need to scale quickly, with flexible options for bandwidth, and have the ability to add more capabilities as your needs change. Modern network platforms allow you to invest in the tools you need now with the option to quickly add other services such as SD-WAN, WiFi, cloud connectivity services and other network enhancements when you need them.

3. **Provider simplification**
    When your network is supported by hardware and services from different vendors, it can be difficult to track down issues and determine who to call for help. Modernizing a network with connectivity and networking solutions from one provider offers a single point of accountability. You have a centralized portal to manage and one organization to contact across internet, networking, security and other solutions for immediate, end-to-end support.

4. **Managed services**
    Skill sets vary in every IT team. Whether its support for an upgraded network design or the day-to-day management of security updates, most organizations can benefit from additional help with their networks. A Robert Half survey found that 95% of technology managers face challenges finding talent.[5] Network modernization with managed services provides a way for overextended IT teams to control the aspects of the network they know well while having the service provider manage the rest.

5. **End-to-end visibility**
    A patchwork of hardware added over the years makes it difficult to view the entire network at once. This can hinder IT decision-making and efforts to optimize resources. Modern networking platforms provide end-to-end visibility so organizations can quickly identify areas for improvement and execute changes from the cloud.

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Modernize your network

Cloud service providers have helped level the playing field between large and small organizations when it comes to IT. Your organization can now pay as you go for enterprise-grade tools and the resources of a data center without the barrier of substantial capital investment. These resources have the potential to boost collaboration, enhance decision making and better serve customers.

A modern network can make the most of the rapid transition to the cloud by allocating resources and adapting in near-real time to the dynamic demand of cloud applications. Plus, making the switch to a future-ready network is no longer a daunting project for organizations with constrained IT resources.

Provider-managed solutions customized to your needs can bring the components of your network into a single solution that can be monitored and optimized in one place with options to outsource much of your routine IT workload entirely so you can focus on strategic goals.

[**Learn more**]

1. Jannik Lindner, "The Most Surprising Cloud Adoption Statistics in 2024," Gitnux, Dec. 20, 2023.
2. Ibid.
3. Fabio Duarte, "Number of IoT Devices (2024)," Exploding Topics, February 19, 2024.
4. Kevin Ocasio, "Small Business Cybersecurity Statistics," Small Business Trends, Dec 20, 2024.
5. Ryan M. Sutton, "The Skills Gap in Tech Is Poised to Expand. Employers, What's Your Action Plan?," Robert Half, Feb. 20, 2024.
6. Ibid.

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