

JUST THE FACTS BUSINESS: HELPING YOU TALK ABOUT MONEY

The Cloud

“The Cloud” is the term for a remote server – the centre of a computer network – where computer files are stored. Rather than having everything on your own computer, the Cloud enables you to access the data and information over the Internet from anywhere.

- Traditionally, you would install software and be responsible for updating it, installing patches and other maintenance. With the Cloud, you download the programs and then maintenance and updates are done automatically.
- The Cloud is usually managed on a subscription model, where you pay a fee (usually annually or monthly) for the service.
- Your individual files (documents, photos, videos, etc.) are stored in the Cloud, so you can access them from any computer. (You can also keep files on your own computer or laptop, and use the Cloud as a back-up.)

Why use the Cloud?

- Accessibility from any location. All you need is an Internet connection.
- Increased efficiency, as updates are provided automatically.
- Available to anyone given privileges (protected by passwords or other sign-in methods).
- You are not tied to one computer (which, if it crashes, takes all of your information and software with it).

The importance of having a reputable service provider:

- Minimize cyber-security risks – such as hackers and data breaches – by signing up with a trustworthy Cloud service provider.
- Research the service provider to determine where it is located. (The physical server may be located outside Canada and therefore subject to regulations in that country. For example, many Canadian businesses don't like having their data stored in the United States, because of the Patriot Act and U.S. governments having unlimited access to the data.)
- Read the fine print. Know your rights to the data, the service provider's capacity and the information technology (IT) controls in place.



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