

FREE REPORT:

“5 Critical Facts Business Owners Must Understand Before Even Thinking About Moving Their Network To The Cloud”

Discover What Most IT Consultants Don't Know Or Won't Tell You About Moving Your Company's Network To The Cloud

by Rus Bel

Founder and CEO, The Best Geeks

TheBestGeeks.com

Phone: 281-374-4822

A Letter From The Author: Why Did We Create This Report And Who Should Read It



From The Desk of: Rus Bel
Founder & CEO, The Best Geeks

Dear Colleague,

Undoubtedly you've heard all the commotion around the advantages of cloud computing and how it can save you money in the long run. **Yet, despite all of that, we have found that few business owners really understand what cloud computing is or how it can help your business.**

That's why we wanted to set the record straight and provide business owners and executives a simple, easy to read report that would explain what cloud computing is, how it can (possibly) help their business and if so, what you need to know in order to make good decisions about choosing which vendor you choose.

Why "possibly?" Because cloud computing is NOT a good fit for every company; and if you don't get all the facts or fully understand the pros and cons, you can end up making some VERY poor and expensive decisions that you'll deeply regret later.

That said, for some clients, cloud can actually lower their IT costs by 10% - 30% greatly improve the ability for remote workers to connect and work, simplify their entire IT infrastructure and genuinely solve a number of technology problems that they've been trying to work around for years.

So which are you? By the end of this report you'll know, or at least have a much better understanding. Of course, we are always available as a resource for a second opinion or quick question, so please feel free to contact my office direct if we can clarify any points made in this report or answer any questions you have.

Dedicated to serving you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rus Bel". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

About The Author

I'm Rus Bel, owner of The Best Geeks.

I have spent the last 38 years in the Information Technology field. Let me tell you a little bit about my experience. At 14 years old, working with a Radio Shack TRS-80 computer, I wrote my own calendar program as well as a word/definition flash card program complete with statistics. My computer would wake me up in the morning and tell me what I needed to do and type up any words and definitions that I needed to study that day. Keep in mind this was in the late 1970's.

I went to college at one of the highest-rated junior colleges in the country for Computer Science, and I had a 4.0 average in all of the Computer Science courses.

After graduation, I worked with a premier software company, and as a junior developer was given the responsibility to write over 80 percent of the code for a new sorting program.

Later, I worked with the CIA where I wrote mission critical applications. I have designed, implemented and supported information technology for clients such as the US Army, AT&T, VISA, Citibank as well as the US Naval Hospital in Bethesda, Maryland where the President gets his yearly checkup.

Many of the projects I worked on were mission critical. They had to be done efficiently and effectively or the effects could be devastating. I take that same approach with my clients at **The Best Geeks**. We understand that our clients' business is mission critical. I have seen the way other computer service repair companies work and I wanted to do something radically different. At The Best Geeks, we are **technicians and consultants**. Not only do we fix your current networking and computer problems, we educate you in the process. We learn from you everything we possibly can about your business through very specific questioning designed to help us determine the best available solution for your specific operation. We have experience creating network solutions in the cloud, on-premise, and even hybrid solutions that take the best of both worlds. While it seems to be a dying practice, I believe that if you provide the right solution to a customer as opposed to a solution that will make you the most money, you will have a customer for life.

When you make the decision to choose **The Best Geeks**, I know you will have an experience so rewarding, that you will view our business relationship as a partnership and be compelled to tell everyone that you know.

5 Critical Facts You Must Know Before Moving To The Cloud

In this report I'm going to talk about **5 very important facts you need to know before you consider cloud computing for your company**. This includes:

1. What cloud computing is.
2. The pros AND cons of this new technology.
3. The various types of cloud computing options you have (there is more than just one).
4. Answers to important, frequently asked questions you need to know the answer to.
5. What questions you need to ask your IT pro before letting them "sell" you on moving all or part of your network and applications to the cloud.

At the end of this report there is an invitation for you to request a **Cloud Readiness Assessment** to determine if cloud computing is right for your particular business. I encourage you to take advantage of this before making any decisions since we've designed it to take a hard look at the functionality and costs for you as a business and provide you with the specific information you need (not hype) to make a good decision about this new technology.

What Is Cloud Computing?

Wikipedia defined cloud computing as, "The use and access of multiple server-based computational resources via a digital network (WAN, Internet connection using the World Wide Web, etc.)."

But what the heck does *that* mean, what's the layman's definition? Let's try this:

Rus Bel defines cloud computing as, "When any part of your business is operated outside of your main office".

The easiest way to not only understand what cloud computing is but also gain insight into why it's gaining in popularity, is to compare it to the evolution of public utilities. For example, let's look at the evolution of electricity.

Back in the industrial age, factories had to produce their own power in order to run machines that produced the hard goods they manufactured. Be it textiles or railroad spikes, using machines gave these companies enormous competitive advantages by producing more goods with fewer workers and in less time. For many years, the production of power was every bit as important to their company's success as the skill of their workers and quality of their products.

Unfortunately, this put factories into TWO businesses: the business of producing their goods and the business of producing power. Then the concept of delivering power (electricity) as a utility was introduced by Thomas Edison when he developed a commercial-grade replacement for gas lighting and heating using centrally generated and distributed electricity. From there, as they say, the rest was history.

The concept of electric current being generated in central power plants and delivered to factories as a utility caught on fast. This meant manufacturers no longer had to be in the business of producing their own power. **In fact, in a very short period of time, it became a competitive necessity for factories to take advantage of the lower cost option being offered by public utilities.** Almost overnight, thousands of steam engines and electric generators were rendered obsolete and left to rust next to the factories they used to power.

What made this possible was a series of inventions and scientific breakthroughs – but what drove the demand was pure economics. Utility companies were able to leverage economies of scale that single manufacturing plants simply couldn't match in output or in price. In fact, the price of power dropped so significantly that it quickly became affordable for not only factories but every single household in the country.

Today, we are in a similar transformation following a similar course. The only difference is that instead of cheap and plentiful electricity, advancements in technology and Internet connectivity are driving down the costs of computing power. With cloud computing, businesses can pay for “computing power” like a utility without having the exorbitant costs of installing, hosting and supporting it.

In fact, you are probably already experiencing the benefits of cloud computing in some way but hadn't realized it. Below are a number of clouds computing applications, also called SaaS or “software as a service,” you might be using:

- Gmail, Hotmail or other free e-mail accounts
- Facebook
- NetSuite, Salesforce
- Constant Contact, InfusionSoft, MailChimp, AWeber or other e-mail broadcasting services
- Zoomerang, SurveyMonkey and other survey tools
- LinkedIn
- Twitter
- All things Google (search, AdWords, maps, etc.)
- Quickbooks Online
- Online Backup options

If you think about it, almost every single application you use today can be (or already is) being put “in the cloud” where you can access it and pay for it via your browser for a monthly fee or utility pricing. You don't purchase and install software but instead access it via an Internet browser.

What About Office 365 And Google Apps?

Office 365 and Google Apps are perfect examples of the cloud computing trend.

Hosted Exchange:

We recommend Office 365, because for an inexpensive monthly fee, usually around \$21/month per user if you run Microsoft Outlook locally, you can get a 50GB email account with Contacts, Calendar, Notes, Tasks and use of Office applications per user on up to 5 devices that used to cost a few hundred dollars to purchase. If you have a current version of Microsoft Office then you can get the email box only for about \$10/month. All of those prices are what reputable IT companies should be offering it for with them being the one throat to choke should you have any mail issues.

If you are running your business in the cloud you can pay around the same price to have Microsoft Office available on your cloud server. And, since these apps are being powered by the cloud provider, you don't need an expensive desktop with lots of power to use them – just a simple Internet connection will do on a laptop, desktop or any mobile device including I-phones and Tablets.

Both Office 365 and Google Apps provide “hosted exchange like” email/contacts/calendar. That means that ALL of your mail, including every single folder and saved email are available to you.

Document Handling:

The difference lies in the way they handle documents. Office 365 uses the Microsoft SharePoint infrastructure to organize and manage the documents. For people just starting out this is not the easiest of ways to managed documents. Google Doc's uses an entirely different method and is very tightly integrated with Android phones. There are special Apps to run on your phone that allows one to manage/see your documents.

In general, The Best Geeks is not a major fan of either of these document handling solutions. We use a highly secure solution that we know can recover from ransomware attacks completely allow file synchronization and collaboration as well.

Pros And Cons Of Moving To The Cloud

As you read this section, keep in mind there is no “perfect” solution. All options – be it an in-house network or a cloud solution – has both upsides and downsides. And which option has to be determined on a case-by-case scenario before you can come to a complete conclusion on which option will work for you. (Warning: Do not let a cloud expert tell you there is only “one way” of doing something.) Some companies end up with a **hybrid solution** where some of their applications are in the cloud and some are still hosted and maintained from an in-house server. We’ll discuss more of this in a later section; however, here are the general pros and cons of cloud computing:

Pros Of Cloud Computing:

- **Lowered IT costs.** This is probably the single most compelling reason why companies choose to move their network (all or in part) to the cloud. Not only do you save money on software licenses, but hardware (servers and workstations) as well as in IT support and upgrades. So if you hate constantly writing big, fat checks for IT upgrades, you’ll really want to look into cloud computing.
- **Ability to access your desktop and/or applications from anywhere and any device.** If you travel a lot, have remote workers, have multiple locations or prefer to use an iPad while traveling and a laptop at your house, cloud computing will give you the ability to work from any of these devices. A virtual desktop can be configured that is just like the one at the office except it is in the cloud. Depending on the cloud solution you may access this virtual desktop through some special software or through the web.
- **Disaster recovery and backup are automated.** The server in your office is extremely vulnerable to a number of threats including viruses, human error, hardware failure, software corruption and, of course, physical damage due to a fire, flood or other natural disaster. If your server were in the cloud and (God forbid) your office was reduced to a pile of rubble, your business could return to operational status within the same day. This would NOT be the case if you had a traditional network and were using tape drives, CDs, USB drives or other physical storage devices to back up your system.

Plus, like a public utility, cloud platforms are far more robust and secure than your average business network because they can utilize economies of scale to invest heavily into security, redundancy and failover systems making them far less likely to go down.

- **It's faster, cheaper and easier to set up new employees.** If you have a seasonal workforce or a lot of turnover, cloud computing will not only lower your costs of setting up new accounts, but it will make it infinitely faster. For instance, when you bring on your next employee, all you have to do is tell your cloud provider his information and what data he should have access to and as long as he has an internet connection your new employee is all taken care of.
- **You use it without having to "own" it.** More specifically, you don't own the *responsibility* of having to install, update and maintain the infrastructure. Think of it similar to living in a condo where someone else takes care of the building maintenance, repairing the roof and mowing the lawn, but you still have the only key to your section of the building and use of all the facilities. This is particularly attractive for companies who are new or expanding, but don't want the heavy outlay of cash for purchasing and supporting an expensive computer network.
- **It's a "greener" technology that will save on power and your electric bill.** For some smaller companies, the power savings will be too small to measure. However, for larger companies with multiple servers who are cooling a hot server room and keep their servers running 24/7/365, the savings are considerable.

Cons Of Cloud Computing:

- **The Government and your data.** The Government can demand a copy of your data from your cloud provider and they must give it to them and NOT inform you about it. For more information research the third-party doctrine exception to the Forth Amendment. Most providers are not going to tell you this since it is true for anything you are using offsite to run your company. There are cases out there where companies have had their data seized. If you give your property (data) to another person (cloud provider), there is no expectation of privacy when it comes to the Government. Between the Patriot Act of 2001 and the Electronic Communication Privacy Act of 1986 (ECPA) the laws have already been interpreted in the way just mentioned.
- **The Internet going down.** In general if at your location the Internet is down you are not going to get any work done. You can mitigate this risk by using a commercial grade Internet connection and maintaining a second way to access the internet. A business class firewall/router should be purchased if you want to take advantage of internet connection switching should your primary internet connection go down. What we have found is that most of the time when both Internet connections are down then there usually is a power outage going on as well. In which case you will not get any work done anyway.
- **The Internet is very slow.** In April of 2017 one of the internet backbone companies Level III had a nationwide major issue as thousands of their fiber lines were cut. This caused significant internet delays for some businesses (cursors not responding for over 20 seconds, and disconnections) for some clients. Yes, the

vendor that hosts your cloud server has multiple internet connections from the Internet Service Providers, but if your Internet Service Provider does not provide you a service level agreement then they do not have to re-route your traffic to avoid one of the Internet backbone vendors. In fact, some internet service providers do not have ability to avoid certain hops along the way to your cloud server. This is a big and important factor and the single most important reason why we insist on using an Internet connection that provides service level agreements. Your big companies like Comcast and AT&T provide you with amazing speeds with absolutely no guarantees. When something happens, they may not do anything about it, like re-route your mission critical traffic.

- **Data security.** Many people don't feel comfortable having their data in some offsite location. This is a valid concern and before you choose any cloud provider, you need to find out more information about where they are storing your data, how it's encrypted, who has access and how you can get it back. You'll find more information on this under the "What To Look For When Hiring a Cloud Integrator" later on in this document. What we find is that once the data is no longer at the client location, there is better security. Nobody can walk in the server room any more, login to the server and take your data.
- **Certain line-of-business applications either won't work in the cloud or require work to figure out how to make them work in the cloud.** At the outset of going to the cloud, this was an issue to be overcome almost at every installation. Now that "the cloud" is becoming more popular this quickly is becoming less and less of a concern.
- **Compliance Issues.** There are a number of laws and regulations such as Gramm-Leach-Bliley, Sarbanes-Oxley and HIPAA that require companies to control and protect their data and certify that they have knowledge and control over who can access the data, who sees it and how and where it is stored. In a public cloud environment, this can be a problem. Many cloud providers won't tell you specifically where your data is stored.

Most cloud providers have SAS 70 certifications which require them to be able to describe exactly what is happening in their environment, how and where the data comes in, what the provider does with it, and what controls are in place over the access to and processing of the data; but as the business owner, it's YOUR neck on the line if the data is compromised so it's important that you ask for some type of validation that they are meeting the various compliance regulations on an ongoing basis.

Cloud Verses A Traditional Network: A Comparison Of Costs

As we said earlier, each client has a slightly unique set of circumstances and needs that will factor into the cost savings and benefits. But in order to give you an idea of what you can save when moving your network to the cloud, we've put together a sample business scenario we commonly find, and the savings obtained with cloud computing.

Please note we've shown this over a 3 year period since that is the normal span of time when all workstations and servers need to be replaced and software upgraded; and to account for the fact that you don't have to purchase new hardware as often (which is a huge cost savings when moving to the cloud) we need to show this over a 3 year period to show the true and full cost savings:

ACME Consulting		
This is a professional services firm that has 15 employees all using Microsoft Office. Other applications being used include QuickBooks, Microsoft Exchange and SharePoint.		
Item	Tradition Network Cost Over 3 Years	Cloud Network Cost Over 3 Years
Hardware		
Server 1	2500	N/A
Server 2	2500	N/A
Workstations (15)	15000	Just need a thin client
Software		
Microsoft Operating System	3000	*included
Microsoft Office Licenses	5625	*included
Microsoft Small Business Server and 15 seats	3000	*included
Anti-virus	900	*included
Spam Filtering	3600	*included
Other Costs		
Internet Connection (Primary)	3600	3600
Internet Connection (Secondary)	2160	2160
Firewall	2700	2700
Backup (onsite and offsite)	14400	*included
Labor		
Outsourced IT Support for Maintenance	70200	43200
Cloud		
Cloud charges	N/A	67500
Total Costs	\$ 129,185	\$ 119,160
Savings:	\$\$\$ 10,025	

Different Types Of Cloud Solutions Explained:

Pure Cloud: This is where all your applications and data are put on the other side of the firewall (in the cloud) and accessed through various devices (laptops, desktops, iPads, phones) via the Internet. Your server(s) and workstation virtual machines are all running in the cloud and all you have outside is a device with an application that accesses the Internet.

Hybrid Cloud: Although “pure” cloud computing has valid applications, for many, it's downright scary. And in some cases is NOT the smartest move due to compliance issues, security restrictions or performance issues. A hybrid cloud enables you to put certain pieces of existing IT infrastructure (say, storage and e-mail) in the cloud, and the remainder of the IT infrastructure stays on premise. This gives you the ability to enjoy the costs savings and benefits of cloud computing where it makes the most sense without risking your entire environment.

Point Solutions: Another option would be simply to put certain applications, like SharePoint or Microsoft Exchange, in the cloud while keeping everything else onsite. Since e-mail is usually a critical application that everyone needs and wants access to on the road and on various devices (iPad, smart phone, etc.) then often this is a great way to get advanced features of Microsoft Exchange without the cost of installing and supporting your own in-house Exchange server. There are many good Hosted Exchange solutions to pick from.

Public Cloud Vs. Private Cloud: A public cloud is a service that anyone can tap into with a network connection and a credit card. They are shared infrastructures that allow you to pay-as-you-go and managed through a self-service web portal. Private clouds are essentially self-built infrastructures that mimic public cloud services, but are on premise. Private clouds are often the choice of companies who want the benefits of cloud computing, but don't want their data held in a public environment.

FAQs About Security, Where Your Data Is Held And Internet Connectivity

Question: What if my Internet connection goes down for an extended period of time?

Our Answer: If you have a firewall that will switch between a primary and secondary Internet connection then this does not happen, hardly at all. While this is a valid concern, to this point we have never had both the primary and secondary Internet go out at the same time other than having a power outage.

Question: What happens if the Internet slows to the point where it's difficult to work productively?

Our Answer: This can happen and you would have no recourse if you are using an Internet Service Provider that does not provide Service Level Agreements (SLA's). If this does happen, you can contact your IT provider and or your Internet Service Provider for help in determining if there is anything that can be done. The good news is the bandwidth needed to access the cloud is much less than what you would need if you were not using the cloud. But if this were to happen and your business allows it, you can go somewhere else where there is an Internet connection.

Question: What about security? Isn't there a big risk of someone accessing my data if it's in the cloud?

Our Answer: In many cases, cloud computing is a MORE secure way of accessing and storing data. Just because your server is onsite doesn't make it more secure; in fact, most small to medium businesses can't justify the cost of securing their network the way a cloud provider can. And most security breaches occur due to human error; one of your employees downloads a file that contains a virus, they don't use secure passwords, or they simply e-mail confidential information out to people who shouldn't see it. Other security breaches occur in on-site networks because the company didn't properly maintain their own in-house network with security updates, software patches, and up-to-date anti-virus software. That's a FAR more common way networks get compromised versus a cloud provider getting hacked.

Question: What if YOU go out of business? How do I get my data back?

Our Answer: We would in an orderly fashion transfer control of your cloud servers to another highly trusted provider on your behalf. We also give every client a login to our documentation system where their entire network is documented. You have the ability to save all of your information to files, or we can do that for you. You have documentation that clearly outlines where your data is and how they could get it back in the event of an emergency. This includes detailed information of emergency contact numbers, information on how to access your data and

infrastructure without needing our assistance, although our plan is always to be there to support you.

In fact, you should never hire ANY IT professional that won't give you that information. As a minimum, an image backup of each of your server(s) are onsite and the last days Image backup is in the cloud at an offsite location for disaster recovery purposes.

Question: Do I have to purchase new hardware (servers, workstations) to move my entire business to the cloud?

Our Answer: No! That's one of the selling points of cloud computing. It allows you to use older workstations, laptops and servers because the computing power is in the cloud. Not only does that allow you to keep and use hardware longer, but it allows you to buy cheaper workstations and laptops because you don't need the expensive computing power required in the past. Once you are in the cloud all of the applications on your local computer can be un-installed. Now that speeds up your machine doesn't it? All you will need is a simple application to run on your device. You can even use those multiple monitors you have too.

What To Look For When Hiring A Cloud Integrator

A "cloud integrator" is a fancy name for an IT consultant who helps you set up and integrate the various software and solutions into a cloud service specific for your business. But buyer beware! The cloud is still fairly new technology and you don't want just anyone setting you up on this.

Unfortunately, the computer repair and consulting industry (along with many others) has its own share of incompetent or unethical people who will try to take advantage of trusting business owners who simply do not have the ability to determine whether or not they know what they are doing. Sometimes this is out of greed for your money; more often it's simply because they don't have the skills and competency to do the job right but won't tell you that up front because they want to make the sale.

From misleading information, unqualified technicians and poor management, to terrible customer service, we've seen it all...and we know they exist in abundance because we have had a number of customers come to us to clean up the disasters they have caused.

Automotive repair shops, electricians, plumbers, lawyers, realtors, dentists, doctors, accountants, etc. are heavily regulated to protect the consumer from receiving substandard work or getting ripped off. However, the computer industry is still highly unregulated and there are few laws in existence to protect the consumer – **which is why it's so important for you to really research the company or person you are considering to make sure they have the experience to set up, migrate and support your network to the cloud.**

To that end, here are 15 questions you should ask your IT person before letting them migrate your network to the cloud:

Critical Questions To Ask Your IT Company Or Computer Consultant BEFORE Letting Them Move Your Network To The Cloud (Or Touch Your Network!)

Q1: How many clients have you provided cloud services for to date and can you provide references?

Our Answer: The cloud is becoming more and more mainstream yet many IT companies don't have that much experience. Meet with them eyeball to eyeball, see if you trust them. Make sure they explain their plan to implement and to go back should you need to back out.

Q2: How quickly do they guarantee to have a technician working on an outage or other problem?

Our Answer: Anyone you pay to support your network should give you a written SLA (service level agreement) that outlines exactly how IT issues get resolved and in what time frame.

They should at least answer their phones live from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and provide you with an emergency after-hours number they may call if a problem arises, including weekends.

If you cannot access your network because the Internet is down or due to some other problem, you can't be waiting around for hours for someone to call you back OR (more importantly) start working on resolving the issue. Make sure you get this in writing; often cheaper or less experienced consultants won't have this or will try and convince you it's not important or that they can't do this. Don't buy that excuse! They are in the business of providing IT support so they should have some guarantees or standards around this they share with you.

Q3: What's your plan for transitioning our network to the cloud to minimize problems and downtime?

Our Answer: We do not "turn off" the old network until everyone is 100% confident that everything has been transitioned and is working effortlessly. You don't want someone to remove first base just as your start to steal second, because going back would be costly!

Most importantly within the first 30 days if you decide that our cloud solution is not for you we will tear up the agreement and help you move back to your onsite network. if so desired, on our dime!.

Q4: Do they take the time to explain what they are doing and answer your questions in terms that you can understand (not geek speak), or do they come across arrogant and make you feel stupid for asking simple questions?

Our Answer: Our technicians are trained to have the 'heart of a teacher' and will take time to answer your questions and explain everything in simple terms. As the client you must understand what is running your business. If we start using acronyms or "geek speak" jump right in there and ask us what we mean.

Q5: Where will your data be stored?

Our Answer: Your data should not be stored under any circumstances outside the United States. You should receive full documentation about where your data is, how it's being secured and backed up and how you could get access to it if necessary WITHOUT going through your provider. Essentially, you don't want your cloud provider to be able to hold your data (and your company) hostage. The primary datacenter we used is hosted in Austin, Texas.

Q6: How will your data be secured and backed up?

Our Answer: If they tell you that your data will be stored in their own co-lo in the back of their office, what happens if THEY get destroyed by a fire, flood or other disaster? What are they doing to secure the office and access? Are they backing it up somewhere else? Make sure they are SAS 70 certified and have a failover plan in place to ensure continuous service in the event that their location goes down. If they are building on another platform, you still want to find out where your data is and how it's being backed up.

Q7. What is THEIR disaster recovery plan? What happens if they go out of business?

Our Answer: You should be provided with every contact and every phone number you would need for someone to help you in the event your IT consultant was wiped off of the planet.

Q8: Do they have adequate errors and omissions insurance as well as workers' compensation insurance to protect YOU?

Our Answer: Here's something to consider: if THEY cause a problem with your network that causes you to be down for hours or days or to lose data, who's responsible? Here's another question to consider: if one of their technicians gets hurt at your office, who's paying? In this litigious society we live in, you better make darn sure that whomever you hire is adequately insured with both errors and omissions insurance AND workers' compensation – and don't be shy about asking to see their latest insurance policies!

True Story: About ten years ago Geek Squad was slapped with multi-million dollar lawsuits from customers for the bad behavior of their technicians. In some cases, their techs where accessing, copying and distributing personal information they gained access to on customers' PCs and laptops brought in for repairs. In other cases, they lost clients' laptops (and subsequently all the data on

them) and tried to cover it up. Bottom line: make sure the company you are hiring has proper insurance to protect YOU.

Q9: Is it standard procedure for them to provide you with written network documentation detailing what software licenses you own, your critical passwords, user information, hardware inventory, etc., or are they the only person with the “keys to the kingdom?”

Our Answer: All clients receive a login to our documentation system where all of this is documented. In addition, we can export this information into an HTML or CSV file depending on what it is. We perform an ongoing update to your documentation when anything changes. This gives you complete control over your network.

Side Note: You should NEVER allow an IT person to have that much control over you and your company. If you get the sneaking suspicion that your current IT person is keeping this under their control as a means of job security, get rid of them (and we can help to make sure you don't suffer ANY ill effects). This is downright unethical and dangerous to your organization, so don't tolerate it!

Q10: Do they have other technicians on staff who are familiar with your network in case your regular technician goes on vacation or gets sick?

Our Answer: Yes; and since we keep detailed network documentation (basically a blueprint of your computer network) and updates on every client's account, any of our technicians can pick up where another left off.

Q11: Do they INSIST on doing periodical test restores of your backups to make sure the data is not corrupt and could be restored in the event of a disaster?

Our Answer: We test your backup server daily to make sure it will work when the crisis happens. We also set up the backup programs so in the event there is an error we are notified by email and a ticket is generated. If there's a problem, we notify our clients immediately and start working to resolve it the same day. After all, the WORST time to “test” a backup is when you desperately need it.

Q12: Is their help-desk US-based or outsourced to an overseas company or third party?

Our Answer: We provide our own in-house help desk here in Houston Texas, and make sure the folks helping you are friendly and helpful. We consider this one of the most important aspects of customer service, plus we feel it's an important step in keeping your data secure.

Q13: Do their technicians learn on your dime?

Our Answer: Every technician no matter which IT company they work for has to “learn” something from time to time. Our technicians are required to keep excellent records and when we need to “learn” something, that time is categorized as NC (No Charge). Our hiring process is so stringent that 95% of the technicians who apply don’t make it through. (Guess who’s hiring them?)

Q14: Are they familiar with (and can they support) your unique line of business applications?

Our Answer: We own the problems with all line of business applications for our clients. That doesn’t mean we can fix faulty software – but we WILL be the liaison between you and your vendor to resolve problems you are having and make sure these applications work smoothly for you instead of pointing fingers and putting you in the middle.

Q15: When something goes wrong with your Internet service, phone systems, printers or other IT services, do they own the problem or do they say “that’s not our problem to fix”?

Our Answer: We feel WE should own the problem for our clients so they don’t have to try and resolve any of these issues on their own – that’s just plain old good service and something many computer guys won’t do.

A Final Word...

I hope you have found this guide helpful in shedding some light on cloud computing. As I stated in the opening of this report, my purpose in providing this information was to help you make an informed decision and avoid getting burned by the many incompetent firms offering these services.

If you are in the Houston metro area, below you will find information on how to request a Cloud Readiness Assessment. We will be happy to meet with you to understand what you are trying to accomplish and let you look us in the eye to decide if you would like our help. We will meet with you for free, if during this meeting we determine that you are not a candidate to move to the cloud we will tell you the reason why. However, if we get past that point there will be a fee to analyze your current environment to determine how you can best utilize the cloud to accomplish your business objectives.

Cloud Readiness Assessment

As a prospective customer, the cloud readiness assessment consists of three parts:

1. **Cost Analysis and Inventory:** Our first step is to look at what your current network consists of in hardware, licenses, data, and applications. Next, we compile an IT cost assessment to reveal your total spend on IT, including Internet connectivity, support and other fees. Most business owners have never really look at their entire IT costs this way and often this report alone is an eye-opener. Why do we do this? Because our goal is to find ways we can significantly lower those costs while simplifying and improving your workflow.
2. **Health Check:** We will perform an audit of your entire network to look for potential problems, security loopholes, spyware and other hidden problems that you might not know about. Often we find faulty backups, out-of-date anti-virus software, faulty firewalls and missing security patches that, if not addressed, could end up costing you MORE in new hardware, support, business downtime and data loss.
3. **Cloud Readiness:** After we've looked at the above areas, we then look at how you and your employees work and share information and see what applications or processes we can safely move to the cloud to improve ease of use and, of course, lower costs.

When complete, we'll give you a Cloud Action Plan that shows you how we can save you money and resolve a number of workarounds and problems you may have been experiencing to date. Even if you decide not to hire us, having a third party conduct this type of assessment will give you some good information on saving money and the security and health of your computer network.

How To Request Your Cloud Readiness Assessment:

To request your **Cloud Readiness Assessment**, you may reach out to our corporate office and tell the operator you want a cloud readiness assessment, or you may use our website contact us link at <http://thebestgeeks.com/contact-us>. You can also email info@thebestgeeks.com.

Remember to include your name, company name, why you are contacting us and how to reach you in your communication.

We will see you soon!

Rus Bel

Founder and CEO, The Best Geeks

Phone: 281-374-4822

Email: info@thebestgeeks.com

Web: <http://thebestgeeks.com/contact-us>