EXECUTIVE VIEWPOINT

Considerations for Co-located & Cloud-based Data Centers

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As businesses jockey for position in today's digital economy, many are seeking the advantages of co-located and cloud-based data centers. Managed hosting provider Liquid Web's executives, Chief Operations Officer Carrie Wheeler and Chief Financial Officer Terry Flood, share their insights and guidance for companies making this transition.

Q. What's driving businesses to move away from their on-premises data centers toward co-located data centers and cloud?
Wheeler: Security is the most pressing driver because it has become enormously challenging. Companies would rather focus on their businesses than become security and compliance experts.

Other considerations include being able to leverage a robust, world-class data center in terms of availability, resiliency, redundancy, and disaster recovery, as well as added functionality and refresh opportunities.

Flood: From a CFO perspective, the ability to move from a CapEx model to a pay-as-you-go OpEx model enables better resource alignment to organizational goals. Also, the different flavors available when moving to the cloud—infrastructure, platform, or software-as-a-service—enable organizations to buy complete solutions versus making various layered investments.

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Additionally, end-of-life versions may need upgrades. These instances can result in pretty significant development requirements. This impacts all components down the stack and necessitates adding time for performance testing. Successful transitions can be extraordinarily complex and often require planning, development, and testing.

The transition also changes how business processes work and how people interact with equipment. As such, organizations should take the time to understand the scope of support they will receive from their new provider. Digging into the terms of service can help clarify the engagement process for when issues arise. There is a lot of change management as opposed to embracing a new technical component.

Q. What aspects do organizations tend to overlook when decommissioning data centers?
Flood: Organizations need to understand the market for used computer assets to receive the best return. For instance, it's important to decommission before a wide sweeping upgrade floods the market and significantly drops prices.

There's also legislation about IT asset disposal, including a growing number of municipalities regulating the process. You need a thorough

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Q. What are some of the issues that arise as companies make this transition?
Flood: Organizations need to remain cognizant of the types of data they are moving, because successfully addressing compliance issues either requires expertise or strong partners who can assist. Moving proprietary and legacy tools from one adaptation to another can also present issues. On the network side, it's important to avoid introducing latencies that would slow down the platform you are running.

Wheeler: It's crucial to seriously consider the underlying configurations. Unfortunately, people

understanding of how to handle data currently residing on these machines.

Having a knowledgeable partner on board provides access to decommissioning expertise, the ability to capitalize on timing opportunities, and an understanding of the latest regulations and best practices. ■

When moving infrastructure and applications to the cloud, large or small, finding experienced partners who can help you plan, build, run, support, and decommission your hybrid environment is as important as cost. For more information, visit www.arrow.com/s-tech.

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