



# Cloud Computing 101

*What is Cloud Computing & What does it Mean*

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My head is in the clouds today :-)

For another paper I'm working on, I'm preparing a quick primer on Cloud Services - and I thought I'd just include part of it here. Hopefully, if you're as confused about Cloud Services - and that that really means - as I was this will be helpful. These are all considered part of cloud computing. Full disclosure: I'm not trying to be all encompassing here - just illustrative for a reference point.

1. **Software-as-a-Service.**

These types of companies deliver a single computer application, usually through a browser interface. Business Web examples of this type of company include Salesforce.com for CRM and Sales Force Automation, NetSuite for Accounting and CRM, ExactTarget for email campaign management and Omniture for web analytics and online marketing.

2. **Platform Based Services**

There is another type of Software-as-a-Service application and these are providers that open up their entire application to let developers create new types of applications on them. For example Salesforce.com has a subscription called AppForce. This allows creative developers to write entirely new applications based on the Salesforce.com platform. So, for example, someone could write an entire online marketing application based on the AppForce.com platform. This way a startup doesn't have any infrastructure costs – and can scale quickly should their new application become successful. Google has recently announced a similar type of platform

3. **Grid Computing (or Utility computing)**

Amazon.com, IBM and Dell have all announced offerings for this type of service which provides customers with the ability to use virtual servers and computers for large, usually supplemental tasks. This allows organizations that need temporary server farms for large projects the ability to subscribe to a large data center for some large computing project.

4. **Cloud-based Web Services**

These types of services are usually provided by larger organizations that make aspects of their applications available via a subscription service. For example Google makes their “maps” application available via a Web service – meaning that if anyone wants to create a web based application that requires a mapping component, they don't have to build that – they can simply use Google's mapping services. Other types of services include news wires for content services, social networking aggregation for community and even things like credit reporting and credit card processing.

As you start to consider different types of applications for moving out to the cloud - just keep these categories in mind.

Again, hope it's helpful.