

The Journey to the Cloud Begins by Speaking the Same Cloud Language

Every company wants to make the right cloud decision for their business. As a result, more companies than ever ask their vendors to describe the cloud capabilities of their products. However, as you ask your vendors cloud questions, verify that you both use the same cloud language. You may find that how you and your vendors define the cloud differ significantly which can quickly result in communication breakdowns.

Technology providers feel intense pressure to remain relevant in a rapidly changing space. As more companies adopt the cloud, they want to make sure they are part of the conversation. As such, one should have no problem identifying products that support the cloud. However, some vendors take more liberties than other in how they apply the term cloud to describing their products' features.

The Language of Cloud

For better or worse, the term "cloud" can mean almost anything. A simple definition for the cloud implies the ability to access needed resources over a computer network. Hence, any product that claims "*cloud support*" means it can simply access resources over a computer network, regardless of where they reside.



Pictures of blue skies and fluffy clouds that often accompany vendor descriptions of “*cloud support*” for their products do not help clarify the situation. These pictures can lead one to assume that a product provides more robust cloud support than it truly delivers.

By way of example, almost every enterprise backup product claims support for the cloud. However, the breadth and depth of cloud support that each one offers varies widely. To assess the true scope of each one’s cloud support, one first needs to understand the language they use to describe the cloud.

For instance, if you plan to use the cloud for long-term backup retention, most enterprise backup products connect to a cloud. The key here is be very clear in what they mean by “connectivity to the cloud”. Key questions you should ask include:

- Does the product’s cloud support include connectivity to any large general-purpose cloud providers such as [AWS](#), [Azure](#), or [Google](#)?
- Does the product need to work with all three of these cloud providers?
- Does its support include any S3 compliant public cloud?
- Does the product support more cost-effective public cloud options such as [Wasabi](#)?
- Does its cloud support refer to a purpose-built cloud for backup and DR such as [Unitrends](#) offers?

Getting questions like these answered will provide you the

insight you need to determine if the cloud capabilities of their products matches your requirements. That understand can only occur if you are both first speak the same language.

Multi-cloud can be Just as Cloudy

As companies connect to the cloud, many find they want the option to connect to multiple different clouds. This option gives them more power to negotiate prices as well as flexibility to deploy resources where they run best. But here again, one needs to drill down on exactly how a product delivers on its multi-cloud support.

Key questions that you must ask when evaluating a product's multi-cloud capabilities include:

1. To which public clouds can the product connect, if any?
2. To which private clouds can it connect, if any?
3. Can it connect and use multiple clouds simultaneously?
4. Can it connect and use public and private clouds at the same time?
5. Does it offer any features beyond just connectivity to manage the cloud's features?

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Companies today more so than ever want to start their journey to the cloud. To begin that journey, you must first speak the same language. Start by defining what the cloud means to you, or what you think it means to you.

This may even require you to engage some of your preferred vendors or partners to help you draft that definition. Regardless of how you arrive at your definition of the cloud, the sooner you do, the sooner you can ask the right questions, understand the answers given to you, and get the clarity you need to choose products that support the cloud in the way that

you expect.