Snow and Floods. Why they make the Case for Cloud Computing.

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The last few weeks have seen some extreme weather in the UK, with extensive flooding and now heavy snow so over a matter of a few weeks we have gone from:





To:



Looking across the Atlantic we have seen Hurricane Sandy and the impact that has had on communities in the USA. The issue for business revolves around survivability and productivity; how do we keep going while our employees are forced to work from home during the snow or because of flooding?

The answer is straightforward; move your data and applications into the cloud. Few issues illustrate the advantages of utilising cloud technologies more dramatically than extreme weather; the business still needs to trade so employees need to work!

There are many advantages of using cloud services but the most relevant one here is the ability to access your data from anywhere with any device at any time. Another sea change over recent years has been the wider acceptance of BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) which has serious security [implications](http://www.managedserviceexpert.com/blog/byod-security-consequences-and-how-to-deal-with-them) which now have a [solution](http://www.managedserviceexpert.com/blog/telcos-and-making-money-in-a-commoditised-market) which of course means the user does not have to go to a particular location or use a specific machine to us IT or access their data.

Deliberately or not, most businesses are [already using cloud services](http://www.webroot.com/En_US/business/articles/cloud-computing-and-business-productivitya-match-made-in-smb-heaven) of one sort or another, be that Skype, GoToMeeting, Gmail, Salesforce, DropBox etc., and indeed the way these applications have crept into the day to day lives of the business may well mean that cloud adoption is taking place almost by stealth.

So what does the weather mean for cloud adoption? Simply that all IT for entire business could and should be pushed into the cloud. Why not use hosted accounting packages? Data and document sharing is now well established and indeed [Microsoft](http://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/business/solutions/cloud-services.aspx) have a wide portfolio of products geared to meet the needs of organisations of all sizes.

Should the spate of bad weather continue to affect businesses and your employees need to work from another location, the case for moving your IT into the cloud is compelling. Not only are you able to confer this flexibility on your employees you get a strategy that is fully endorsed by the [European Commission](http://www.eubusiness.com/topics/research/cloud-computing) plus significant support from the [IT Industry](http://www.eubusiness.com/topics/research/cloud-computing). The key advantage comes in hard cash savings with surveys illustrating 81% of businesses already using the cloud reported 10%-20% lower IT costs with 20% of them reporting savings rising to 30% or more; I would contend these are conservative figures! These savings are realised as the business does not need to buy an extensive estate of hardware or software licences but instead outsources these requirements elsewhere. This means savings on power, office space and most of all in house IT staff.

Above all the business sees improvements in inter-office communications; using the cloud means you can be separated by miles –continents even and still be on the same page which is clearly a great advantage when snow or flooding affects employees capacity to get to work.