

Content Services: Leveraging Cloud for Improved IT and Business Outcomes

As organizations steadily migrate content to the cloud, their focus should shift to content services

It's no longer sufficient to simply manage and store content. To achieve true business value, the right content must be delivered quickly and securely into the right hands at the right time.

Doing so increases productivity, improves decision-making and provides better customer experiences. A seamless content services approach also moves digital transformation goals forward while improving IT operations.

The cloud plays a significant role in achieving these goals, while also accomplishing economies of scale. To better understand how this is playing out in terms of content services, IDG Research conducted a survey among 50 IT and business executives across all industries and company sizes. Among the results: 58 percent of enterprises say they're migrating content to the cloud.

Yet to attain the business and IT benefits they seek, organizations must go a step further and adopt a cloud-based content services strategy, which includes capabilities that integrate and take advantage of enterprise-wide content from solutions such as enterprise resource planning (ERP) and customer relationship management (CRM) systems.

Perspectives on managing content

Respondents are familiar with the concepts of enterprise content management (ECM), content services, enterprise information management and content management services. Roughly one-third to 40 percent of the IDG survey respondents say they are using at least one of these solutions.

There's also widespread use of secure file-sharing applications to manage content. Almost two-thirds of IT leaders say these apps are either in production in a business unit or used enterprise-wide, or they have existing deployments

that are being upgraded. Another 22 percent are piloting new file-sharing initiatives.

Yet despite employing these types of solutions, organizations cite several challenges when it comes to managing content, including:

- Security (60 percent)
- IT operations (54 percent)
- Regulatory compliance and risk management (46 percent)

Cloud-based content: Many reasons for the move

To overcome these obstacles, enterprises are increasingly migrating content to the cloud.

"Where we used to have to convince enterprises that the cloud was secure, today that is no longer the case. Cloud customers are embracing the cloud, comfortable with its security and the economies of scale it provides," says Marc Cianciolo, director of Global Cloud Services at Hyland.

Indeed, IT leaders overwhelmingly see the benefits. Asked which model they prefer—cloud or on-premises—to achieve operational advantages in content management, cloud is consistently the top choice.

Chart Your Course with Content Services

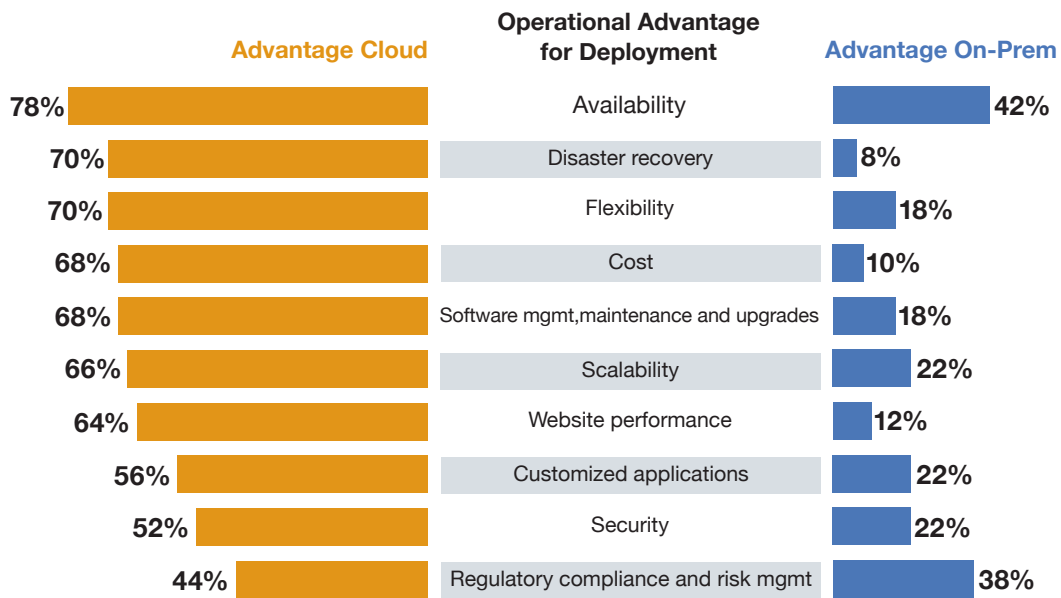
Hyland provides solutions that manage information, simplify processes and connect systems. The company helps more than 19,000 customers handle their most critical content and processes to empower efficiency and agility. **The Hyland Cloud** has been custom designed with hosting content applications in mind.



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In choosing cloud or on-premises, business leaders weigh the operational advantages



SOURCE: IDG Research Services, June 2018

Furthermore, they believe cloud is the right fit for all types of content management—image capture, archiving, retrieving and disseminating enterprise content, creative/collaboration, administering user-generated content, and document management.

In addition to improving IT operations, enterprises see the potential to boost digital transformation initiatives by migrating content to the cloud. In fact, 80 percent of respondents view cloud-based content management as the preferred technical solution for digital transformation, and 75 percent say cloud is fundamental to the success of their organizations' digital transformation efforts.

Going hand-in-hand with leveraging a cloud provider are the SLAs associated with availability, disaster recovery and business continuity. That said, companies should seek cloud service providers that adhere to strict standards for security and compliance, and have technical controls in place for managing intrusion detection and potential hacking issues, among others.

Storing the organization's content in a co-located facility hundreds of miles away should be viewed as a benefit. If a natural disaster strikes, the managed cloud provider ensures content is available, secure, and redundant. Even without such an environmental event, most organizations simply can't afford downtime or outages.

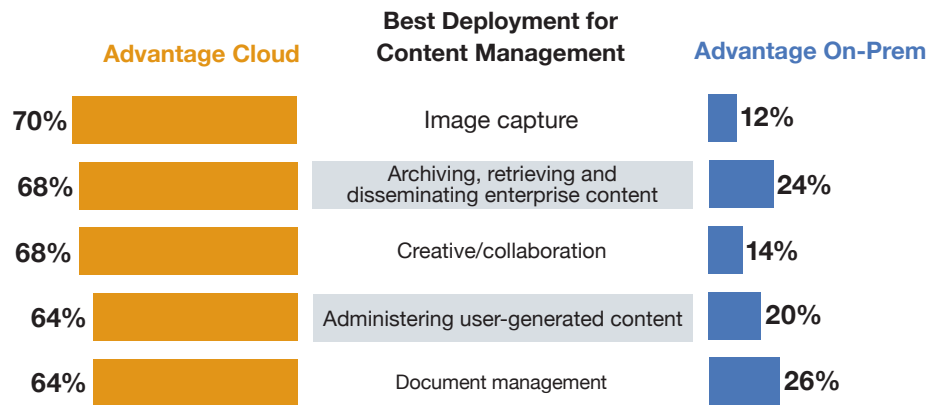
No matter the incident's cause, SLAs ensure the onus falls on the cloud provider.

The next step: content services

Now that they are relatively comfortable migrating content to cloud, IT leaders need to take it to the next level. To truly gain business and IT efficiencies and capitalize on digital transformation initiatives, organizations should look to adopt cloud-based content services.

Although it's a relatively new term, content services is an inherently straightforward concept. Gartner refers to it as a shift from self-contained systems and repositories to an aggregation of content across multiple solutions and disparate applications. In other words, it's

IT and business leaders say content management is better in the cloud than on-premises



SOURCE: IDG Research Services, June 2018

about integration. Services such as document management and image capture are integrated with information-rich apps like HR onboarding and case management software, as well as components such as language translation or content tagging capabilities.

By integrating these platforms, applications, and components, content is no longer stuck in siloed repositories like CRM, ERP, accounts payable applications, etc. Content services enables organizations to use a wide variety of these solutions to serve multiple business units, departments, and users—while also incorporating user access controls.

The advantages are many. From the IT perspective, this integration improves IT operations and supports digital transformation initiatives. Using a cloud-based content services platform reduces the resources burden by leveraging the provider’s infrastructure expertise, while optimizing security, compliance and risk management.

For the business, content services means

getting the right content into the right hands at the right time, regardless of repository. By improving user access, the organization also improves productivity and decision-making, while providing better customer experiences.

The bottom line

IT leaders already recognize the value of storing and managing content. The next step is to move beyond information silos and single content repositories.

Cloud-based content services places the focus squarely on the processes by which content is used.

“It’s about access to expertise across infrastructure, network security, compliance, application and platform development,” says Cianciolo. “For industries across the board – healthcare, government, education, financial services, legal –they’re able to maintain the core competence of the business they’re in, without having to worry about being experts in the infrastructure and hosting side of the equation.”



For more information about content services, including analyst reports and other resources, [click here](#).

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