



Diagnosing cloud complexity: Recognize the symptoms in your organization

Cloud promised to lower costs and increase agility. But is the growing complexity of multi-cloud, hybrid cloud, and legacy systems holding you back?

It seems to me that enterprise IT complexity is like back pain; everyone's got it, or will have it. It's how you manage it, how you treat it, and how you deal with it ahead of time that makes all of the difference.

After leveraging cloud computing, look out for these symptoms of cloud computing complexity:

- Adding or removing applications or datasets takes more time.
- Systems and operations costs actually go up.
- Operations personnel turnover is higher than before cloud computing implementation.
- Leadership questions the value, and the business case is way off.

Are one, two, three, four, or all of these issues part of your cloud experience? You may have a complexity problem, one that needs to be corrected ASAP. You also need to put a mechanism in place to ensure that moving forward you're reducing complexity, not increasing it, as your enterprise continues to leverage cloud computing.

Cloud complexity is not a new diagnosis. Certain people look at IT architecture as something that exists to serve a single application or small systems domain.

These days, many organizations fail to select a cloud technology to serve enterprise IT as a whole. They deal with a series of tactical application use cases that all have one-off cloud architectures. Do that 20 to 30 times, and you'll have a real problem.

The result is predictable. Cloud promised to lower costs and increase agility, but you face a complex mess of cloud technologies built by one project after another. Things are difficult to change and the value that cloud was supposed to bring isn't there. Moreover, toss the keys to those in CloudOps and you'll likely to see them fall down from the number of moving parts and heterogeneous complexity that they are trying to operate. Companies today commit a huge amount of time and money to migrating applications and data to the cloud. This makes IT infrastructure such as storage and platforms—open and cloud-based systems—more complex for administrators, developers, and ultimately end users.

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Legacy systems still have to run, and you, the IT leader, now have public and private cloud-based systems to deal with as well. Things continue to get more complex and without proper planning, the symptoms can get worse.

There's no over-the-counter remedy here, and you can't ignore the problem and expect it to work itself out. If you do, the number of systems, cloud and otherwise, will eventually become cumbersome and impossible to manage. The first step is to acknowledge IT complexity as chronic issue with potentially enterprise-wide ramifications. Address the symptoms, but also grow your IT organization with an eye on complexity. As they say, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

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