

The Future Is Flexible

Embracing the New Normal of Federal IT Environments

While most cloud platforms operate on a single cloud environment, a hybrid cloud offers agencies the flexibility to operate in both a public or private environment. Now, this flexible approach is helping federal agencies address the IT challenges of the future.

THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT IT: The past few years have tested what the federal government is capable of. From sanding up COVID-19 testing sites and supporting the rapid development of vaccines to distributing funding to struggling businesses and communities, agencies have certainly had their work cut out for them. But if there's anything the public sector has learned over the last couple of years it's the power of flexibility. Things can change in the blink of an eye — and organizations need to be able to pivot accordingly.

That means the technology these federal agencies rely on to meet their mission must be flexible, as well. Enter: The hybrid cloud approach. While most cloud platforms operate on a single cloud environment — public or private — hybrid cloud offers agencies the flexibility to operate in two or more of these environments. This approach gives agencies the best of both worlds, reaping the benefits of the public and private cloud and doing so on their own terms.

The Case for Going Hybrid

Hybrid cloud offers several business and operational advantages for federal agencies. In fact, according to a [recent IBM report](#), hybrid cloud can generate 2.5 times more value than a single cloud approach.

When it comes to hybrid cloud adoption, agencies will likely be met with high upfront costs. However, going the hybrid route can save organizations more money in the long run. That's because hybrid cloud is easy to scale, giving agencies the ability to add more computational power and resources when they need it, instead of having to wait until they can afford to purchase more servers. That scalability can enable organizations to save money as they grow. And because scaling in a hybrid cloud environment is easier and more accessible, organizations can achieve a return on investment more quickly than they would otherwise.

But perhaps the greatest advantage of hybrid cloud is control. Instead of relying solely on a third-party provider to manage its IT infrastructure, a hybrid model enables agencies to take control of their cloud environment and customize it based on their organization's needs and requirements.

A Simplified Approach to Hybrid Cloud Data Storage

With this flexibility, however, comes greater complexity. Managing so much data in so many different locations can be challenging for agencies. According to a [2021 survey](#) conducted in collaboration with IBM, 75% of IT decision makers believe IT is more complex today than it was just two years ago, and 38% say large data volumes contribute to this increased complexity. What's more, 29% attribute data challenges to the need to use both on-premises data centers and public cloud providers.

Moreover, agencies need storage solutions that can handle all this data — and do so securely. Cybercrime continues to permeate organizations everywhere and federal agencies are especially at risk. After all, agencies have access to sensitive information that, if compromised, can have lasting national security implications. According to IBM's 2021 ["Cost of a Data Breach" report](#), data breach costs rose from \$3.86 million to \$4.24 million globally (the highest total cost in the survey's 17-year history). Not surprisingly, breaches where remote work was a factor in causing the breach were over \$1 million more costly than those where remote work was not a factor.

[IBM's storage solutions](#) are built specifically to address these modern security challenges. With cyber resiliency and data protection capabilities, agency IT leaders can monitor their storage environments, detect signs of ransomware, and receive security notifications to help mitigate threats before they happen.

Case Study: Improving Public Safety with Hybrid Cloud

To better understand how federal agencies can effectively meet their mission with hybrid cloud, simply look to the large federal agency that leveraged IBM's hybrid cloud platform to improve quality of life for constituents. Seeing social media as an untapped source of popular sentiment, the agency sought to turn this information into actionable insights that could inform its public safety initiatives. The organization teamed up with IBM and two trusted partners to build a flexible, scalable and secure open-source intelligence solution that could quickly analyze large volumes of data.

The result: Accelerated analysis of time-sensitive data that ultimately helped keep citizens safe.

It's one of the many ways agencies are realizing the power of hybrid cloud to securely meet its evolving needs. Moving forward, as data and security requirements grow in complexity, a hybrid cloud can equip agencies with flexible, scalable and cost-effective approach.

[Learn more](#) about how you can future-proof your agency's IT environment.